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## Second Committee

### Summary record of the 24th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 21 November 2023, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Amorín ..... (Uruguay)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda item 16: Macroeconomic policy questions**  
(continued)

**(a) International trade and development**

(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.6/Rev.1;

A/C.2/78/CRP.2, A/C.2/78/CRP.3 and

A/C.2/78/CRP.4)

*Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.6/Rev.1: Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries*

1. **The Chair**, drawing attention to three proposed amendments to the draft resolution, which had been submitted by Spain on behalf of the European Union and were contained in documents A/C.2/78/CRP.2, A/C.2/78/CRP.3 and A/C.2/78/CRP.4, said that recorded votes had been requested on the amendments.

2. *A recorded vote was taken on the amendment contained in document A/C.2/78/CRP.2.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

*Against:*

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya,

Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Abstaining:*

Equatorial Guinea, Japan, Mexico, Switzerland, Türkiye.

3. *The amendment was rejected by 117 votes to 48, with 5 abstentions.*

4. *A recorded vote was taken on the amendment contained in document A/C.2/78/CRP.3.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

*Against:*

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau,

Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Abstaining:*

Mexico, Switzerland, Türkiye.

5. *The amendment was rejected by 120 votes to 48, with 3 abstentions.*

6. *A recorded vote was taken on the amendment contained in document A/C.2/78/CRP.4.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

*Against:*

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic,

Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Abstaining:*

Israel, Türkiye, United States of America.

7. *The amendment was rejected by 120 votes to 48, with 3 abstentions.*

8. **Mr. Tan** (Singapore) said that his country's vote against the proposal contained in document A/C.2/78/CRP.2, to add a new preambular paragraph after the seventh preambular paragraph, reflected its long-standing opposition to unilateral economic measures. Nevertheless, Singapore reserved the sovereign right to determine national policies in accordance with its positions and priorities.

9. **Mr. Schlaepfer** (Switzerland) said that monitoring the impact of unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries should not, under any circumstances, fall within the mandate of resident coordinators or United Nations country teams. His delegation therefore opposed the new mandate granted under paragraph 7 of the draft resolution and had voted accordingly in the vote on document A/C.2/78/CRP.4.

10. **The Chair** said that draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.6/Rev.1](#) had no programme budget implications and that the representative of the United Kingdom had requested a recorded vote on the draft resolution.

11. **Mr. Meschchanov** (Russian Federation) said that his country wished to become a sponsor of draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.6/Rev.1](#).

12. **Mr. Lawrence** (United States of America), making a statement in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his country had consistently opposed the draft resolution in previous years and would continue to do so. Sanctions were an appropriate, effective, peaceful and legitimate tool for addressing threats to peace and security. They could be used to promote accountability for those who abused human rights, undermined democracy or engaged in corrupt activities. In cases where the United States had applied sanctions, it had done so with specific objectives, including the promotion of democratic systems, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, or to respond to security threats. His country had taken steps to minimize the unintended negative consequences of sanctions, including by advancing Security Council resolution [2664 \(2022\)](#), the purpose of which was to ease the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need while preventing the diversion or abuse of aid by malicious actors.

13. **Mr. Meschchanov** (Russian Federation), making a general statement, said that the draft resolution constituted an appropriate response to illegitimate restrictions and the challenges encountered by Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The use of unilateral economic measures undermined the principle of leaving no one behind and subjected hundreds of millions of ordinary people to collective punishment because they lived in a country in which the Government had opted for a different development path or dared to independently determine its foreign policy. Those in favour of unilateral coercive measures claimed that they did not limit development or well-being, or run counter to the Charter of the United Nations, and could therefore be imposed on any country regardless of the ensuing suffering, illness, degradation and risk of conflict. His delegation was confident that States that imposed sanctions would come to recognize the futility of such measures and take steps to remove them. The Russian Federation supported the draft resolution and urged all delegations to follow suit.

14. **Ms. Marin Sevilla** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), making a general statement, said that no State had the authority to impose unilateral coercive measures on any other, and yet certain Member States were doing so on a growing, systematic, arbitrary and illegal basis. Her country faced systematic aggression in

the form of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the precepts of international law. Cruel and inhumane, sanctions were imposed for the purpose of inflicting pain and suffering on entire peoples and deliberately undermining their inalienable right to development.

15. A policy of economic terrorism was depriving her country of its sovereign resources, including gold reserves held with the Bank of England and foreign assets, and hindering its access to special drawing rights through the International Monetary Fund. Once again, the intention was to perpetrate an act of extermination against the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which constituted a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

16. As a result of sanctions against the State-owned oil company *Petróleos de Venezuela*, production had fallen by almost 90 per cent between 2015 and 2022, while losses caused by a decline in gross domestic product (GDP) had amounted to \$642 billion between 2015 and 2020.

17. For such reasons, her delegation was reiterating its call for the total, immediate and unconditional abandonment of sanctions, which were an exercise in neocolonial domination. Such measures also adversely affected the human rights of over 30 million Venezuelans and impeded progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Successfully overcoming the challenges facing humanity would require not the imposition of unilateral coercive measures or arbitrary and unjustified trade restrictions, but rather the adoption of collective, effective, inclusive and innovative solutions, in strict compliance with international law.

18. **Mr. Malinauskas** (Lithuania), making a statement in explanation of vote before the voting, said that certain aspects of the text made it impossible for his country to vote in favour of the draft resolution. Lithuania had abstained in 2021, when a similar draft resolution had been put forward, but the geopolitical situation had changed considerably in the intervening years. Specifically, more sanctions had been imposed on Russia in response to its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. Moreover, the negotiation process had been one-sided; language favourable to the proponents of the draft resolution had been accepted without

consideration whereas counter-proposals had been rejected without any attempt to compromise.

19. Sanctions were an integral part of a broader political strategy and a legitimate tool with which to respond to grave violations of the Charter of the United Nations, and to uphold human rights and the principles of international law. They were a means of fostering international peace, security and democracy, rather than an end in themselves. Those imposed by the European Union, in particular, were targeted and measured, and not used against developing countries.

20. The premise that sanctions negatively affected development efforts was false because sanctions did not exist in a vacuum. Serious human rights violations and armed conflict were more detrimental to development efforts and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Several paragraphs of the draft resolution were therefore misleading. His delegation also regretted the fact that certain amendments to make the text more balanced had not been accepted. Achieving the 2030 Agenda would entail upholding universal principles such as good governance, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and non-use of force. Sanctions served to protect those values and to maintain peace and international security.

21. **Mr. Kelsey** (United Kingdom), making a statement in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his country recognized that the 2030 Agenda urged States to refrain from promulgating or applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that contravened international law and the Charter of the United Nations or impeded the full achievement of economic and social development. While his delegation remained open to discussing how such measures were used, it opposed the draft resolution on the basis that it misrepresented sanctions.

22. Targeted sanctions were one part of a comprehensive and proportionate foreign policy strategy, and were imposed by many Member States, including developing countries and regional bodies. They served to deter and constrain serious human rights violations, breaches of international law, proliferation and the obstruction of peace processes. The Charter of the United Nations provided no blanket prohibition on sanctions applied for such purposes, which could be entirely consistent with the purposes and principles of the Organization. Sanctions imposed by the United Kingdom provided for a range of exceptions, including in relation to medicine, food and humanitarian assistance.

23. While his delegation had approached the negotiations facilitated by Syria in good faith, little effort had been made to address its concerns and no flexibility had been shown by the facilitator of the draft resolution. Attempting to assign a new monitoring task to resident coordinators would add pressure to a stretched system and detract from efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. His delegation would continue to vote against proposed language or resolutions that misrepresented sanctions in order to advance political agendas.

24. *At the request of the representative of the United Kingdom, a recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.6/Rev.1.*

*In favour:*

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.



*Against:*

Australia, Canada, Israel, Lithuania, New Zealand, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

*Abstaining:*

Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye.

25. *Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.6/Rev.1 was adopted by 132 votes to 8, with 42 abstentions.*

26. **Mr. Martín Couce** (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union and 26 of its member States, said that many countries, including emerging and developing countries, used unilateral economic measures. It was therefore important to distinguish between them on the basis of their purposes, design and outcomes. The restrictive measures imposed by the European Union were a legitimate and lawful part of its wider policy approach. They served to uphold its values and interests, protect peace, support democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law, and strengthen international security.

27. The European Union imposed restrictive measures, among other cases, in response to serious violations of international law, such as the unprovoked war of aggression perpetrated by Russia against Ukraine. Its measures were temporary, selective and carefully calibrated to target those responsible for the relevant policies or actions, as well as always being consistent with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. To ensure full compliance with humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law, the restrictions imposed by the European Union systematically included humanitarian exceptions. The European Union embraced transparency regarding such measures and their use, and was mindful of unintended consequences. Such measures could be challenged in court and reversed when circumstances so dictated.

28. The States members of the European Union recognized that unilateral economic measures could have broader consequences when they were applied in a manner incompatible with international law and the

Charter of the United Nations, and if they were not subject to legal challenge or reversal. It was on that basis that his delegation had participated constructively in the negotiations and had proposed a series of amendments to make the draft resolution more balanced. It was regrettable that the three amendments put forward by the European Union had not been accepted. However, in recognition of the importance of the draft resolution for many of its partners, which were extremely concerned about unilateral measures that contravened international law and the Charter of the United Nations, the European Union had decided to abstain on the draft resolution as a whole.

29. **Mr. Romero Puentes** (Cuba) said that in the context of complex global crises and the socioeconomic consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, developing countries faced escalating inequality, increasingly unsustainable debt burdens, falling revenues and insufficient access to financial markets. For many, the situation was aggravated by an unacceptable intensification of unilateral measures as a means of political and economic coercion. Unilateral coercive measures directly threatened the sovereignty and political independence of States. They violated the principle of non-interference in internal affairs and hindered development and the full enjoyment of human rights. They were designed to create economic and political difficulties for the targeted States, without any real distinction between the Governments concerned and the people. Cuba rejected the use of unilateral coercive measures against any country as incompatible with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and a violation of the basic norms of the multilateral trading system and the World Trade Organization.

30. Cuba was the victim of the harshest and most prolonged unilateral coercive measures in history, imposed by the United States of America, whose economic, commercial and financial blockade created severe hardships for the Cuban people and constituted the main obstacle to Cuban development. As long as countries continued to impose unilateral coercive measures, the 2030 Agenda would remain unattainable. It was time to establish a more just, equitable and inclusive international order. Unfortunately, the delegation of the United States had once again opposed the draft resolution, in blatant disregard of the appeal of developing countries for uncoerced and unconditional economic relations. For Cuba, unilateral coercive measures could never be legal or legitimate. The vote

that had just taken place showed that the majority of countries shared that view.

31. **Mr. Rupende** (Zimbabwe) said that, in a world in desperate need of peace and security, unilateral coercive measures must be replaced by dialogue between Member States to resolve their differences. Coercive measures had an adverse impact on the development of targeted countries, inflicted grave and irreparable damage to their economies, and prevented their populations from exercising their human rights.

32. The imposition of unilateral economic measures continued to impede his country's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. They also undermined the collective efforts of the Southern African Development Community and the international community as a whole to realize a more equitable and sustainable world. The draft resolution reflected States' shared responsibility to rectify the imbalances caused by unilateral actions that disproportionately affected the most vulnerable. He urged all delegations to embrace a spirit of solidarity and collaboration to ensure that every country, regardless of its size or economic strength, had the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the Goals.

33. **Ms. Kavaleuskaya** (Belarus) said that unilateral coercive measures negatively affected the sustainable development of targeted countries. They caused significant harm to a whole range of sectors of the national economy of the targeted country, hindered trade and investment cooperation with foreign partners and prevented economic growth. Unilateral sanctions forced the Governments of targeted developing States to divert limited resources to alleviate the negative impacts of such measures on the population in general. Thus, unilateral coercive measures, whatever form or nature they had, negatively affected the human right to well-being, work and decent remuneration, depriving people of confidence in the future. Belarus shared the view that resident coordinators and United Nations country teams had a valuable role to play in researching the impact of the imposition of unilateral coercive measures. It called for a complete cessation of the practice.

34. **Mr. Altarsha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution, which shed light on the devastating consequences of the unilateral economic measures imposed by a group of Western countries seeking to exert economic and political pressure. In his report (see [A/78/506](#)), the Secretary-General had noted an increase in the number of unilateral economic measures in recent

years, and had highlighted their impact in areas such as humanitarian assistance, health care and finance. Such measures were a crime against humanity and should be lifted immediately and unconditionally.

35. The statements made by certain delegations were hard to comprehend, including the claim by the United States of America that steps had been taken to minimize the impact of unilateral coercive measures on daily life, and the criticism levelled against the negotiations and the facilitator by the United Kingdom. Member States had had every opportunity to adopt the language proposed by those seeking to amend the draft resolution and had chosen not to do so. Such language could not be imposed without the necessary support of the majority of States.

36. Those opposing the draft resolution were guilty of hypocrisy. They had never been to a country subject to unilateral coercive measures and did not understand the daily suffering they caused. The issue might be political for States imposing such measures, but it was a humanitarian matter for targeted countries. The existence of humanitarian exceptions to unilateral coercive measures showed that those imposing them understood the impact they had on the lives of ordinary people.

*Statements made in exercise of the right of reply*

37. **Mr. Lawrence** (United States of America) said that it was regrettable that another Member State had decided to use a multilateral forum to spread disinformation. The Assad regime continued to conduct a disinformation campaign, with Russian support, to take advantage of the dire humanitarian situation in Syria as a means to skirt sanctions implemented in response to the regime's continued war against its own people. Sanctions were an important tool to press for accountability for the Assad regime, especially with respect to its appalling record of human rights violations and abuses. The commitment of the United States to promoting accountability for those responsible for atrocities in Syria and justice for the victims was unwavering. Without accountability, the Syrian people would never experience a stable, just and enduring peace.

38. The sanctions imposed against the Syrian regime by the United States did not target the provision of humanitarian goods, including medicine, medical supplies and food. The Syria sanctions programme provided authorizations, exemptions and general licences for humanitarian aid and medical supplies to

reach the Syrian people, including those in regime-held areas. The Assad regime was the one obstructing access to humanitarian aid for Syrians in need.

39. In 2021, the United States had expanded long-standing humanitarian exemptions, exceptions and authorizations to cover additional transactions and activities related to COVID-19, including the delivery of face masks, ventilators and vaccines. As the largest single donor of humanitarian assistance for the Syria conflict, the United States had provided nearly \$16 billion in aid to vulnerable people inside Syria and refugees who had fled to neighbouring countries.

40. **Mr. Altarsha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the representative of the United States of America had undermined his own message. The fact that authorizations and exceptions had been made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the earthquake of 2023 clearly demonstrated that Syria had been struggling to import humanitarian aid, of which it was in desperate need owing to unilateral coercive measures. It was no coincidence that all targeted States were developing countries with foreign policies that were similar to each other but very different from those of Western countries. Unilateral coercive measures were evidently being used for purely political, rather than humanitarian, reasons. Such measures could almost certainly not be imposed through Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

41. He asked whether the representative of the United States believed it was right to impose sanctions and then appear before the Committee to brag about humanitarian assistance. The United States was not helping Syria; it was taking Syrian oil and Syrian wealth and then calling itself a “major donor”. Just like a corporation making large charity donations to avoid paying tax, the United States was giving aid to Syria while simultaneously taking millions of dollars in Syrian oil every day. The delegation of the United States could not argue with the fact that Syria would not need humanitarian aid were it not for unilateral coercive measures and the blockade to which his country was subject.

42. He reminded the Committee that the Security Council had failed to renew the cross-border mechanism in July 2023 owing to the opposition of Western countries. In response, the Government of Syria had taken the sovereign decision to open three border crossings and two crossings into Idlib to protect the flow of humanitarian aid. He advised the delegation of the United States not to lecture the Committee about the generosity of its Government, and to remember the

situation in Afghanistan, Libya and many other countries.

43. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that yet another discussion had taken place in the Security Council the day before regarding the links between peace and development. Unfortunately, that meeting was further confirmation of the fact that the delegations of the United States of America and other Western countries viewed the human rights agenda as open to manipulation, with blatant disregard for the interests of developing nations.

44. The representative of the United States had claimed that sanctions did not encompass medical equipment, humanitarian goods or food. In fact, such items were subject to sanctions. The purpose of the United Nations, in his country’s view, was to achieve a shared understanding of reality. His delegation disagreed with those of the United States and European Union regarding the scope of sanctions. The draft resolution clearly demonstrated the role of the United Nations when such disagreements arose. He was confident that the Secretary-General, resident coordinators and country teams would fully implement the draft resolution and deliver on the mandate entrusted to them. Their reports would immediately establish the facts.

#### **Agenda item 18: Sustainable development**

(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.28/Rev.1; A/C.2/78/CRP.5)

*Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.28/Rev.1: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls for realizing all Sustainable Development Goals*

45. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the request contained in paragraph 9 of the draft resolution would constitute an addition to the workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in 2025, and would entail additional resource requirements in the amount of \$71,800 in 2025. Detailed cost estimates and the underlying assumptions for the requirements had been provided to delegates. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.28/Rev.1, additional resource requirements estimated in the amount of \$43,200 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and \$28,600 for consultants to conduct the research and data analysis, expert drafting of the report, editing and design of a version to be published online under section 17,



UN-Women, would be included in the proposed programme budget for 2025 for the consideration of the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session.

46. **Ms. Buenrostro Massieu** (Mexico), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that to deny that gender equality was crucial for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda was to deny the Agenda itself. The draft resolution incorporated gender equality into the three dimensions of sustainable development and added value by asking the Secretary-General to provide a thematic report. She thanked the delegations that had contributed to the negotiations and urged all Member States to send a resounding signal in favour of gender equality and sustainable development by supporting the draft resolution.

47. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Afghanistan, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

48. She then noted that the following delegations also wished to become sponsors: Albania, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Timor-Leste.

49. **Mr. Abdelaal** (Egypt), introducing the amendment to draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.28/Rev.1](#), as contained in document [A/C.2/78/CRP.5](#), said that his and other delegations had stated throughout the informal consultation process on the draft resolution that the Second Committee was designed to address only economic and financial matters. His delegation had repeatedly requested the deletion of paragraph 9 of the draft resolution on the basis that the matter should be discussed within the relevant committee. The proposed amendment represented an attempt to resolve the issue by asking the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Third Committee, whose members had the necessary expertise to discuss issues pertaining to the draft resolution in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

50. **The Chair** said that a recorded vote had been requested on the amendment.

*General statements made before the voting on the amendment*

51. **Mr. Anyaegbu** (Nigeria), said that the proposed amendment to paragraph 9 would streamline the work of the Second Committee and ensure that the issues that the draft resolution sought to address were given due consideration by experts in the Third Committee.

52. **Ms. Dibba** (Gambia) said that it was regrettable that her delegation's concerns regarding the duplication of processes within the Second Committee had not been taken into account. Her delegation and others had relied upon the expertise of members of the Third Committee during informal discussions of the draft resolution. It was therefore evident that members of the Second Committee lacked the expertise to engage in a substantive debate on the relevant issues, which should be addressed by the Third Committee. Voting against the proposed amendment would also undermine the integrity of the women in development resolution put forward on a biennial basis by the Group of 77 and China.

53. **Mr. Al Nahhas** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the proposed amendment brought balance to the text of the draft resolution. The purpose of the draft resolution would be best served by the Third Committee, whose members had expertise in the relevant area.

54. **Ms. Alomair** (Saudi Arabia) said that her delegation would vote in favour of the draft amendment because the draft resolution did not fall within the mandate of the Second Committee.

55. **Mr. Gueye** (Senegal) said that the draft resolution was a duplicate, as his delegation had highlighted during the negotiation process, in that draft resolutions on women in development were submitted to the Second Committee every two years. Furthermore, it was important to remember the skills and attributes of each committee; the Second Committee covered economic and financial matters, while the Third Committee focused on topics such as the advancement of women and the fight against gender-based violence. The Third Committee was therefore the right forum to discuss the draft resolution.

56. He asked for confirmation of whether the draft amendment was permissible, as there did not appear to be any provisions in the rules of procedure to prevent one committee from referring a matter to another.

57. The Chair said that he did not believe that there were rules against such a referral, but there might not be any precedents for one either. The question could not be resolved in the time available since it would require detailed analysis.

58. **Mr. Al-barati** (Yemen) said that the draft amendment had the full support of his delegation. Asking the Secretary-General to cover the subject within an existing report to the Third Committee was practical and efficient, and in line with Member States' shared commitment to enhancing the reporting mechanism of the United Nations.

59. **Mr. Al-Khalidi** (Iraq) said that his delegation supported the proposed amendment to paragraph 9 as the subject of the draft resolution fell within the purview of the Third Committee. It also represented a duplication of effort, since the General Assembly resolution [77/181](#) on women in development, submitted in 2022, had included multiple references to gender equality.

60. **Mr. Ghafouri** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation would vote in favour of the amendment proposed by Egypt for a number of reasons. First, the role of women in the realization of sustainable development was already covered by a resolution approved by the Second Committee. Second, his delegation's concerns had been ignored during the negotiation process. Third, the Second Committee lacked the necessary expertise to discuss the issue of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Fourthly, the mandate of the Second Committee was to address economic and financial matters rather than social issues.

61. **Mr. Moussa** (Niger) said that his country attached immense importance to equality between the sexes and female empowerment, and had implemented laws, programmes and strategies to ensure that women and girls were not left behind. His delegation supported the proposed amendment, which would refer the draft resolution to the Third Committee, where specialists in social issues and human rights could analyse and debate the issues raised.

62. The Niger understood references in the draft resolution to gender and related concepts to be founded on the biological categories of male and female, and rejected all ideological attempts to deviate from the generally accepted definitions of such terms. It was unfortunate that paragraph 6 made no mention of parental rights in the context of the equal, full and meaningful participation of youth, when that category

included individuals defined as children by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

63. Paragraph 3 of the draft resolution called upon Member States to "increase the participation of people in vulnerable situations, including workers in the informal economy". His delegation regretted that wording, which reflected an effort to promote the decriminalization of prostitution. The Niger reserved the right to interpret and implement the provisions contained in the draft resolution in accordance with its laws and development priorities, the religious, ethical and cultural values of its population, and universally recognized human rights.

64. **Mr. Abdelaal** (Egypt) said that he was grateful to the Chair for confirming that the proposed amendment did not contravene any rules of procedure and to the Secretary for her input. While it was true that it was unusual for one committee to refer a matter to another, there was a first time for everything. As the proposed amendment was in line with the rules of procedure, Member States were at liberty to reach a collective decision.

65. **Mr. Mezang Akamba** (Cameroon) said that his delegation would vote in favour of the draft amendment and called upon all Member States to follow suit.

*Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting on the amendment*

66. **Mr. Schlaepfer** (Switzerland) said that his country attached immense importance to gender equality, which was vital for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Switzerland therefore welcomed the decision to present the draft resolution to the Second Committee and supported paragraph 9 thereof. He encouraged all delegations to vote against the proposed amendment and support the draft resolution put forward by Mexico.

67. **Mr. Croker** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation deeply regretted the proposed amendment, which was an attempt to limit discussion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls within the Second Committee. The relevance of the subject to the Second Committee was clear from General Assembly resolution [70/1](#). The argument that it should be addressed by the Third Committee alone undermined the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the efforts by the majority of Member States to unlock the potential of women and girls to accelerate progress towards the achievement of all global development priorities. Moreover, from a procedural perspective,

having one committee unilaterally seek to assign work to another would set a concerning precedent.

68. **Ms. Udell** (United States of America) said that her delegation was deeply disappointed by the efforts of some countries to divorce Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls from sustainable development and the work of the Second Committee. The proposed amendment was vague, and it set a troubling precedent by allowing one committee to delegate reporting to another committee. She urged all delegations to vote against the proposed amendment and to support the text as submitted by Mexico.

69. **Ms. Buenrostro Massieu** (Mexico), said that it was regrettable that there was a proposal to amend the draft resolution submitted by her country. The draft amendment had been presented a mere 24 hours before the adoption of the text, leaving delegations little time to assess its merits and possible implications. It also set questionable precedents at the procedural and substantive levels.

70. First, requesting the Secretary-General to report on the topic of the draft resolution within an existing report in the Third Committee would make the draft resolution difficult to implement, since the draft amendment did not specify the agenda item or report in question. Member States should not issue instructions to the Secretary-General that were vague or open to misinterpretation. She asked the Secretary whether there were any previous examples of resolutions in which one committee assigned work to another.

71. Second, the proposed amendment perpetuated the false narrative that gender equality could be discussed only in the Third Committee, thus undermining the commitments established in the 2030 Agenda. It was clear that the proposed amendment would make it harder to monitor the mainstreaming of gender and the role of gender equality in the promotion of decent work, the care economy and the provision of public services and social protection policies.

72. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, while she could not claim to have encyclopaedic knowledge of every draft resolution, it was certainly unusual for one committee to assign work to another.

73. **Ms. Ríos Serna** (Colombia) said that her delegation would vote against the draft amendment because it was inappropriate, from a procedural perspective, for one committee to insist that a topic be included in a report to another committee, when it was

unclear which report would be affected and what the implications of such a decision would be. Moreover, paragraph 9 of the draft resolution submitted by Mexico clearly articulated the need to better understand the interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goal 5 and the other Goals, as well as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

74. **Ms. Linton** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that the draft amendment would undermine efforts to achieve sustainable development at the social, environmental and economic levels. The issues that were to be covered by the report referred to in the draft resolution related to economic development and therefore fell squarely within the purview of the Second Committee. The proposed amendment also set a terrible precedent whereby one committee sought to dictate the work of another.

75. **Mr. Martín Couce** (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that the draft amendment contradicted the draft resolution by implying that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls were irrelevant to economic growth. In fact, investing in gender equality made a positive contribution to efforts to eradicate poverty, address the climate crisis and promote economic growth, all of which were valid topics for discussion within the Second Committee.

76. As set out in the 2030 Agenda, Member States had agreed to mainstream a gender perspective in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It would be valuable to have the Secretary-General produce a report on how to achieve that objective and implement it within the Second Committee. The draft amendment was unprecedented and established an undesirable practice whereby one committee asked the Secretary-General to produce a report for another committee, when the calendars of the two committees might not be aligned. Moreover, it did not provide the Secretary-General with clear guidance on how the report was to be issued. The European Union would vote against the proposed amendment and it urged other delegations to do the same.

77. **Ms. Kristmoen** (Norway) said that all societies, whether rich or poor, needed to utilize their human resources fully, regardless of gender. Society as a whole lost out when the talent and efforts of women were not put to proper use. It was clear from the history of Norway that a policy of inclusiveness had led to continuous and sustainable growth. In fact, the above-average participation of women in her country's

workforce had been shown to account for a larger share of GDP than the entire petroleum sector. She urged all Member States to join Norway in voting against the draft amendment and to support the draft resolution as submitted by Mexico.

78. *A recorded vote was taken on the amendment.*

*In favour:*

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

*Against:*

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

*Abstaining:*

Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Guyana, Haiti, India, Lebanon, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Suriname, Timor-Leste, Tunisia.

79. *The amendment was adopted by 86 votes to 70, with 16 abstentions.\**

80. **Ms. Buenrostro Massieu** (Mexico) said that her delegation did not agree with the adoption of the draft amendment, as Member States had not had enough time to give it due consideration. The draft amendment opened the door for other committees to assign work to the Second Committee. Furthermore, the mandate was so generic and broad that the Secretary-General might not interpret it as intended by members of the Committee. She thanked the sponsors of the original text and expressed her hope that the contents of the draft resolution would be interpreted in a manner favourable to the mainstreaming of a gender perspective and the role of gender equality in the promotion of decent work, the care economy and the provision of public services and social protection policies.

81. **Ms. Tholin** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that those delegations wished to dissociate themselves from the procedural tricks introduced that day. They did not agree that the Second Committee could or should assign an issue that rightfully belonged to the Second Committee to the reports of other committees. Doing so disrupted the proceedings of both committees, undermined the work of the United Nations on Sustainable Development Goal 5 and set a dangerous precedent.

82. **Ms. Nipomici** (Republic of Moldova) said that her delegation, as one of the sponsors of the original text, was not in a position to support the draft amendment as adopted and would therefore have to dissociate itself from the draft resolution.

83. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Committee) said that her previous statement regarding programme budget implications had related to [A/C.2/78/L.28/Rev.1](#) as originally drafted. The statement would need to be reviewed in the light of the draft amendment that had been adopted.

84. **The Chair** said that a recorded vote had been requested on draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.28/Rev.1](#), as amended.

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\* The delegation of Fiji subsequently informed the Committee that it had intended to abstain.

85. **Mr. Alqudah** (Jordan), making a statement in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his country did not agree with or consider itself bound by paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, whose language ran counter to international law. That paragraph should not be interpreted as infringing upon the right of all States to enact legislation in accordance with their obligations under international law, including laws dealing specifically with gender.

86. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.28/Rev.1, as amended.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Türkiye, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam.

*Abstaining:*

Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Belarus, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Comoros, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan,

Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

87. *Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.28/Rev.1, as amended, was adopted by 116 votes to none, with 60 abstentions.*

88. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that his country had participated in and pioneered international efforts to expand women's rights and opportunities for over 100 years. It nonetheless viewed the draft resolution as an unacceptable violation of the division of labour among the committees as set out in the Charter of the United Nations, an encroachment upon the mandate of the Second Committee and a duplication of the work of the Third Committee. Unfortunately, the proponents of the draft resolution had ignored ongoing efforts to revitalize the work of the General Assembly. As a founding member of the United Nations and a member of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations, the Russian Federation could not watch those trends unfold with indifference.

89. It had been clear during the negotiation process that no consensus had been reached on procedural matters, despite attempts to agree a compromise. Under the circumstances, his delegation could not view the document as consensus-based or as a source of language for other documents of the General Assembly. With regret, he also wished to raise the budgetary implications of the adoption of the draft resolution, although he stressed that the Russian Federation had never objected to meaningful consideration of the issue of gender equality. His delegation had therefore abstained from the vote on the draft resolution, as amended.

90. **Mr. Imanuel** (Indonesia) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution based on its deep commitment to female empowerment and sustainable development. It was disappointing, however, that the views of many countries had not been taken into account during the negotiation process, which had been characterized by a lack of transparency, tolerance and mutual respect. Forcing through a text sowed division among countries and threatened the consensus on female empowerment. Member States



should take the adoption of the draft resolution as an opportunity to consider whether they wished to strive towards a consensus on female empowerment or push for one-sided, supposedly progressive narratives. For its part, Indonesia would continue to seek consensus through constructive and respectful dialogue.

91. His delegation was also concerned that the United Nations was backtracking on its commitment to revitalizing the work of the General Assembly. The streamlining process was not simply managerial; it would ensure the meaningful implementation of the decisions of the United Nations at the national and local levels. The contents of the draft resolution were similar to, and in some cases duplicated, the resolution on women in development. Collective attention should be focused on working towards the effective implementation of that resolution, which Indonesia would continue to support.

92. As his delegation had repeatedly stated during the negotiations, female empowerment and sustainable development were too important to be taken lightly. The process giving rise to the draft resolution had been hurried and forced, resulting in a text that fell short of addressing actual needs on the ground. For example, no reference had been made to women in need of humanitarian assistance in areas such as Gaza. The delegations should ask themselves whether their intention was to make a genuine contribution to female empowerment or to pass a document destined to be shelved. Indonesia therefore disassociated itself from the third, sixth and eleventh preambular paragraphs, and from paragraphs 1, 4, 7 and 8 of the draft resolution.

93. **Mr. Martín Couce** (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Serbia, said that the delegation of Mexico had worked tirelessly to facilitate the negotiation process and supply clear and transparent guidance, ensuring that the bloc had sufficient time to coordinate its position. The European Union remained fully committed to gender equality, including the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and the empowerment of all women and girls.

94. As the recent Sustainable Development Goals Summit had shown, the international community needed to redouble its efforts to achieve the Goals and realize the pledge to leave no one behind. The draft resolution was to be welcomed because it sought to amplify efforts to realize gender equality and incorporate a gender perspective into all of the Goals, as recommended in the

2030 Agenda. Investing in gender equality would contribute to the achievement of the Goals, and of the key priorities of the Second Committee, including the eradication of poverty, the fight against the climate crisis, universal access to education and economic growth.

95. **Mr. Napurí Pita** (Peru) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution on the basis of its unshakeable commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 5 and its appreciation of the importance of gender equality for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, he wished to reiterate his country's support for efforts to revitalize the work of the General Assembly. Whenever new proposals were presented, it was vital to seek to avoid duplications and to ensure that all Member States were consulted in a comprehensive and timely manner.

96. **Mr. Anyaegbu** (Nigeria) said that his country was a leading advocate of female empowerment, placing great emphasis on the role of women and girls in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. His delegation would have been willing to engage constructively on the text had the draft resolution been submitted to the Third Committee, which contained the requisite experts on gender issues. Moreover, the draft resolution would have better served its purpose if Member States had sought to consolidate the existing platform for discussing women's issues within the Second Committee, which was the resolution on women in development submitted by the Group of 77 and China.

97. His delegation also wished to disassociate itself from paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, which called for "gender-responsive measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of gender-based violence". That language had not been agreed and was riddled with ambiguity.

98. **Ms. Alomair** (Saudi Arabia) said that her country supported gender equality based on a deeply held religious conviction that women were an important component of society. It was vital to ensure the social, political and economic empowerment of women, as well as their ability to exercise their rights. Her delegation had participated effectively in the negotiation process from the outset but had ultimately abstained during the vote on the draft resolution.

99. There was a vital need for complementarity in the work of the various committees. The matter in question should be addressed by the Third Committee, which was responsible for humanitarian, social and cultural issues.

Furthermore, the draft resolution overlapped with the women in development resolution presented every two years by the Group of 77 and China. Duplicating such work created an additional burden and wasted the resources of the United Nations while adding no value.

100. **Mr. Al-naama** (Qatar) said that he was grateful to the Mexican delegation for facilitating the negotiation process. Qatar had voted in favour of the draft resolution because it appreciated the vital importance of female empowerment, the full and meaningful participation of women in society, and the role of women as a cornerstone of sustainable development. The draft resolution reflected his country's legislation and social and religious values.

101. **Ms. Ríos Serna** (Colombia) said that sustainable development and the pledge to leave no one behind could not be achieved without an understanding of the needs, challenges and legal, cultural and structural barriers that prevented women and girls from fully contributing to and benefiting from that development.

102. The 2030 Agenda clearly stated that the Sustainable Development Goals were integrated and indivisible. Member States should not accept rigid and artificial dividing lines designed to impede discussion of certain topics rather than to better organize the work of the United Nations.

103. Her delegation objected to the amendment to paragraph 9 for the substantive and procedural reasons outlined previously. That paragraph must not set a precedent for future reports. Similarly, it should not be interpreted in a manner that undermined the ability of the Second Committee to consider the topic raised by the draft resolution or the report requested in the same paragraph.

104. Colombia would have appreciated a greater degree of ambition, as well as explicit acknowledgement of matters related to health and sexual and reproductive rights. As agreed at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, inclusive sustainable development could not be achieved without prioritizing human rights, including reproductive rights; empowering women and girls; and addressing inequality and the needs, aspirations and rights of women.

105. **Mr. Schlaepfer** (Switzerland) said that the time had come to invest in women and girls. Switzerland was grateful to Mexico for submitting a draft resolution on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls in order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

106. Without urgent action to address climate change, an additional 158.3 million women and girls could be driven into poverty by 2050. His delegation was happy to see that its proposed language on the impact of climate change had been incorporated into the draft resolution.

107. Looking ahead, progress with respect to Goal 5 would remain out of reach unless structural, long-term obstacles to gender equality were eliminated. Switzerland therefore eagerly anticipated the report of the Secretary-General required under the draft resolution.

108. Lastly, it was unfortunate that Member States remained deeply divided on the issue of gender equality. His delegation would continue to engage constructively with a view to ensuring that the Second Committee could contribute to the realization all of the Sustainable Development Goals, including equality between men and women.

109. **Ms. Wong** (Singapore) said that her country recognized that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were crucial for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and remained committed to ensuring equal rights and opportunities. Nonetheless, her delegation was concerned that the draft resolution duplicated the existing work of the Second Committee, including its pioneering women in development resolution, and ran counter to ongoing efforts to streamline overlapping processes and improve the efficacy of the General Assembly. Furthermore, drawing issues and language covered by other committees into the work of the Second Committee could undermine the consensus-based nature of the Committee. Singapore supported a balanced and holistic approach to advancing gender equality within the remit of the Second Committee and would seek to work towards that outcome.

110. **Mr. Al-Khalidi** (Iraq) said that it was unfortunate that the draft resolution contained certain controversial concepts and terminology with respect to the work of the Third Committee. Iraq reserved the right to interpret the draft resolution in accordance with national legislation and universally recognized human rights, and it disassociated itself from the term "gender-based violence."

111. **Ms. Denton-Watts** (Jamaica) said that her country supported efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, which were essential for the realization of the Sustainable Development

Goals. Her delegation supported the women in development resolution and felt that further discussion of the extent to which the draft resolution would build on that resolution should have taken place during the informal consultation process. Moreover, her delegation shared the view that it would have been better for the draft resolution to have been considered in the Third Committee.

112. **Mr. Kelsey** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution and was grateful to Mexico for facilitating transparent and fair negotiations. Women and girls represented half of the world's population and therefore half of its potential. It was unfortunate that certain Member States did not share that view; that they deemed discussions on gender equality and female empowerment to be controversial; that they acted in bad faith; and that they undermined another Member State's right to submit a new resolution.

113. The assertion that gender equality could only be discussed in certain forums or committees was a concerted attempt to roll back the rights of women and girls. The actions of certain delegations with respect to the draft resolution, including male representatives laughing and clapping after the amendment had been passed, belied their claim to view gender equality and female empowerment as priorities.

114. Increasing access to education, supporting family planning and combating sexual violence were essential in creating the conditions for economic opportunity and growth. Those rights were not negotiable. The United Kingdom therefore wished to disassociate itself from paragraph 9 of the draft resolution, as amended, which sought to undermine the centrality of gender equality to sustainable development. It also set a concerning precedent by allowing one committee to delegate reporting to another. Paragraph 9 could not preclude the Second Committee from discussing gender equality.

115. **Ms. Cao Liwen** (China) said that, as the host of the fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, her country had established a sound legal system to protect women's rights and interests and to promote female leadership in all walks of life. It also placed great emphasis on international dialogue and cooperation on women's issues and made every effort to implement the initiatives agreed at events such as the Global Summit of Women in 2015.

116. With regard to the draft resolution, there was a logical division of work among the Main Committees of

the General Assembly, and the Second Committee was not the appropriate venue for a discussion on gender equality. In all previous sessions, the General Assembly had clearly allocated the agenda item on the advancement of women to the Third Committee. While Sustainable Development Goal 5 was important, the implementation of the Goals was not the sole responsibility of the Second Committee, which should respect the division of responsibilities among the Main Committees in order to avoid duplication and the wasting of resources. China supported the amendment proposed by Egypt and had abstained in the vote on the draft resolution as a whole because it had fallen far short of achieving a consensus.

117. **Mr. Ghafouri** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his country had made remarkable progress in realizing sustainable development for women and girls in accordance with its national rules and legislation. Women currently accounted for over 56 per cent of university students, 33 per cent of faculty members and 40 per cent of specialist physicians in his country. Achievements had also been made in relation to boosting the female literacy rate, closing the gender attainment gap in education and improving female participation in the political sphere.

118. The Islamic Republic of Iran was part of a group of countries with concerns about the submission of the draft resolution in the Second Committee. Those views had been repeatedly expressed during the informal consultation process but not taken into account either procedurally or substantively. It was deeply unfortunate that the draft resolution contained controversial concepts that were neither consensus-based nor in line with the norms and cultural values of many Member States.

119. The Second Committee did not have the necessary expertise to discuss gender equality and female empowerment, as its mandate was to focus on economic and financial matters. Moreover, the role of women in sustainable development had already been addressed by the women in development resolution.

120. The Islamic Republic of Iran did not consider itself bound by concepts that ran counter to its national priorities, laws and policies, or its cultural and religious norms and values. It reserved the right to interpret and implement the provisions in the draft resolution in a manner consistent with its legislation, development priorities and ethical values.

121. **Ms. Barah** (Israel) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because gender equality was fundamental for sustainable development. Halfway through the time allotted to achieving the 2030 Agenda, gender trends remained concerning. With gender inequalities persisting across all of the Sustainable Development Goals, mainstreaming a gender perspective would facilitate progress at every level.

122. In allocating the report on mainstreaming a gender perspective to the Third Committee, the Second Committee had missed an opportunity to send a strong, united message reiterating the link between gender and development. It was impossible to talk about development while overlooking the disproportionate impacts of development challenges on women and girls, just as economic growth could not be achieved without ensuring equal opportunities for both halves of the population. The draft resolution represented an important step towards the achievement of Goal 5.

123. **Mr. Gueye** (Senegal) said that his delegation had engaged constructively throughout the negotiations on the draft resolution and believed that gender equality was the basis for a just and egalitarian society. Women had a vital role to play in development and female empowerment.

124. His delegation had abstained from the vote because the draft resolution created more problems than it solved. First, it led to an obvious duplication of effort. In 2020, when discussing the revitalization of the Second Committee, Member States had decided that the subject matter of the resolution on the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon would be addressed within the resolution on disaster risk reduction. It was therefore logical to apply the same approach to the draft resolution, whose subject matter was already covered by the women in development resolution submitted every two years. Second, gender was a social issue that should be addressed by the Third Committee. Third, the text set a dangerous precedent by giving one Sustainable Development Goal undue precedence over others. Last but not least, the negotiation process had lacked transparency and undermined consensus.

125. His country did not object to equality. In fact, it championed equality, both for the achievement of the Goals and as the bedrock of social justice. However, gender equality could only be attained through the elimination of poverty and the economic empowerment of women.

126. **Mr. Al Nahhas** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation had abstained from the vote because the process leading to the draft resolution had been flawed, insufficient and rushed. Most of the draft resolutions adopted that day had completed three or more readings before being put to the vote, whereas the draft resolution in question had not even been read once. Its proponents had insisted on submitting it for adoption prematurely and had ignored requests from Member States for additional time to properly discuss the matter.

127. His delegation was also concerned that the draft resolution could duplicate the work of the Second Committee, and especially that conducted in connection with the women in development resolution. The draft resolution would widen existing divisions within the Second Committee and place an extra burden on small delegations that were already unable to follow all the meetings that were held.

128. Lastly, his delegation disassociated itself from any language that was not in line with his country's values and legislation. Responding to the comment made by the representative of the United Kingdom, he wished to reiterate that the Syrian Arab Republic was not against gender equality. His delegation simply supported the division of labour set out within the Charter of the United Nations.

129. **Ms. Buenrostro Massieu** (Mexico) said that she was grateful to the delegations that had voted in favour of the draft resolution, as well as the many sponsors of the original text. Mexico would interpret paragraph 9, as amended, in accordance with the spirit of the draft resolution and hoped that the report would contain measures to ensure the instrumentalization of Sustainable Development Goal 5 and thereby contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Her delegation would continue to recognize the link between gender equality and sustainable development in every forum of the United Nations. It did not recognize the amended version of paragraph 9 as agreed language.

130. **Ms. Linton** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that the new draft resolution was welcome because it highlighted the interlinkages between gender equality and achieving sustainable development. The great wisdom of the 2030 Agenda was the acknowledgement of the connection between different aspects of socioeconomic development and environmental protection. The relationship between gender equality and economic development was a clear example, since closing the

gender gap in economic participation would add at least \$12 trillion per year to global GDP.

131. It was deeply concerning to note the opposition to the draft resolution expressed by certain Member States and the claim that gender equality was not relevant to the work of the Second Committee. The draft amendment that had been adopted set a terrible precedent by seeking to silo and narrow sustainable development efforts in a way that undermined and excluded half of the population. It was vital to move beyond repetitive and siloed debates that hampered progress. Canada, Australia and New Zealand would continue to advance gender equality and female empowerment, protect against backsliding, address uneven implementation and ensure that no one was left behind.

132. **Ms. Udell** (United States of America) said that her country was deeply committed to advancing gender equality and female empowerment, which made economies more resilient, communities stronger, and nations more peaceful and prosperous. Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls were central to sustainable development and to the work of the Second Committee.

133. It was unfortunate that some delegations had refused to acknowledge that centrality or to constructively engage in negotiations on the draft resolution. That unconstructive approach was especially disappointing in the light of the political declaration of the high-level forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly.

134. The United States regretted that the language on gender equality and empowering women and girls was not stronger in the draft resolution. The omission of sexual and reproductive health and rights was particularly unfortunate given the inherent relationship between sexual and reproductive health and rights, human rights and women's economic empowerment.

135. Her country strongly supported the right to education. While education matters were primarily determined at the State and local levels within the United States, when resolutions called upon States to strengthen various aspects of education, that was done in terms consistent with its federal, state and local authorities.

136. **Mr. Abdelaal** (Egypt) said that the text of the draft resolution did not enjoy consensus and his delegation wished to disassociate itself from the contents of paragraphs 3 and 4. Each representative was responsible

for reflecting the views of their delegation, whether in informal consultations or official meetings. When it was impossible to reach a consensus in the former, the debate continued in the latter. He had noted the comments made in relation to backtracking and a lack of commitment, but it was up to Member States to make decisions and to express themselves in formal meetings, as they had done that day. His delegation did not believe that it was wrong to express a view. Indeed, that was the sole purpose of representing a Member State at the United Nations.

*The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.*