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Chair: Mr. Kemayah, Sr. (Liberia)

Contents

Agenda item 51: University for Peace

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 51: University for Peace (A/73/313; A/C.4/73/L.7)

1. **Mr. Rojas Aravena** (Rector, University for Peace), summarizing the University's achievements during the period 2015–2018 as reflected in the Secretary-General's report (A/73/313), said that the dizzying changes in the international system, marked by uncertainties in strategic global restructuring and the new balance in power relations among the main actors, had plunged multilateral systems into crisis. With particularisms and populist bids for sovereignty and economic protectionism in the ascendant, international partnerships and cooperation nevertheless remained essential to confront the multitude of emerging global threats, including climate change.

2. The technological changes that had allowed millions of voices to emerge through social media had brought so-called fake news with them, affecting political decisions. The technological revolution had a profound impact on the job market and production, and forced people to adapt to rapidly evolving information and communications technology and artificial intelligence. Commercial disputes had repercussions on global and national finances and economies.

3. Without international cooperation, it would be impossible to contain the erosion of democratic governance, the rule of law and democracy by organized crime. Multilateral spaces and global public goods, chief among them the United Nations as a space for debate and action to build a sustainable peace, must be recovered, rebuilt and consolidated. Consequently, the task of the University for Peace was to provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace and non-violence, a pressing need in the current international climate.

4. The University trained leaders in the areas of peace and conflict resolution. Over 2,200 graduates from more than 100 countries made a positive impact on their communities and in the wider world. The majority of its students were women, who played a critical role as peacebuilders.

5. Activities undertaken over the previous three years included a programme on women and disarmament, implemented in collaboration with the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Women working in Government, the armed and police forces, non-governmental organizations and academia had taken part in the programme. In addition, a master's

degree programme in international human rights law in Honduras had drawn 100 judges, prosecutors and human-rights defenders.

6. The University's humanitarian work under the Protection Transfer Arrangement programme, which provided temporary shelter for at-risk citizens of the northern triangle of Central America, had been awarded the "Living Integration" Seal by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the Government of Costa Rica. The programme promoted the right to a life free of fear from persecution and discrimination in those countries.

7. Through its academic departments of international law, environment and development, peace and conflict studies, regional studies, distance education and the doctoral degree programme, the University for Peace provided specialized education with an experiential focus. Students benefited from theoretical and practical instruction and carried out innovative projects. The University's diverse environment enabled students to build inclusive institutional capacities and become part of a broad multinational, multisectoral and multi-ethnic network, bolstering their capacity to transform conflicts and learn from one another.

8. The University's 60 resident and visiting professors delivered a broad view on global topics. While the bulk of University activity took place on the main campus in Costa Rica, the University had offices worldwide. University graduates – 54 per cent of whom were women – did vital peacebuilding work in their countries, often on the front lines of conflict zones, supporting the most vulnerable members of society and creating opportunities for dialogue and conflict resolution.

9. The degree programmes offered by the University, in such areas as gender and peacebuilding, building strong institutions, fostering global partnerships for sustainable development, protection of the environment and natural resource management, and protection of human rights, were directly informed by the Sustainable Development Goals. Many of the University's courses and workshops on human rights were offered in conjunction with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, also based in Costa Rica.

10. He expressed gratitude for the vital support provided by the University's partner institutions, the cooperation agencies of the Governments of Japan, Germany and Switzerland and the Governments of Costa Rica and the United States of America.

11. Current global threats made cooperation imperative; where deep crises and polarization persisted, the exercise of inalienable human rights and protection of the environment became impossible. To that end, multilateral cooperation, new knowledge and renewed political will would enable the international community to chart a new and better course. The University would continue to strengthen its programmes, ensuring a cross-cutting approach to promoting the role of women and the young in protecting humankind and maintaining the quality of academic offerings in the service of multilateralism, sustainable development, human rights and sustainable peace. The support of Member States would enable the University for Peace to better prepare future generations of agents for peace. The desire for peace must be matched by a commitment to build peace.

12. **Mr. Carazo** (Costa Rica) said that the University for Peace was an integral part of the culture of his country, given that the decision to abolish the military nearly 70 years earlier had enabled the Government to redirect resources to education and health, pillars of the Second Republic of Costa Rica established in 1949.

13. The high enrolment rate of women at the University was a welcome trend that should be encouraged, given the vital role of women in peacebuilding and creating more just and inclusive societies. The University's new partnerships and the changes made in its regional offices in order to increase its visibility and impact were equally heartening. Moreover, the scholarship programme and the new agreements concluded over the previous three years were indicative of the University's growing prominence throughout Asia and Africa.

14. Costa Rica remained committed to promoting peace and championing the transformative role of education in that effort. In order to achieve a sustainable peace, such values as acceptance, tolerance and respect must be instilled in the young. In a rapidly changing world, investing valuable resources in education instead of weapons and not wasting lives on the battlefield could make a positive difference. Sustainable development and peacebuilding were part of a single inclusive, preventive process. To that end, partnerships should be built, and a culture of prevention centred on peace and security should be created. Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a collective endeavour that would require investing in educating the young and fostering a culture of peace that promoted just, peaceful and integrated societies.

15. **Mr. Husni** (Sudan) said that the University for Peace had a bright future in pursuing its mission of

spreading peace worldwide. While the high enrolment rate of women was a positive development, he cautioned that the University, which had a student body that was composed of 38 per cent male students and 62 per cent female students, should not become known for its failure to promote gender equality. The University's regional centres, particularly those on the African continent, merited generous support in the form of resources to enhance their capabilities, given their role in promoting peace. In closing, he requested clarification from the Rector regarding what measures, if any, were being taken to ensure equitable geographical representation among University administrators and faculty.

16. **Mr. Rojas Aravena** (Rector, University for Peace) said that the University's office in Addis Ababa, along with its Africa programme as a whole, indeed played a vital role in examining conflict situations in Africa. In addition to seminars and follow-up of doctoral theses, the University's main activity in Africa was its master's degree programme in peace, governance and security for Ugandan police, which was in its second year. The University would endeavour to maintain its support for its regional centres despite cuts in budgets for peace-related activities as a result of current developments in financing international cooperation. He called on African States to allocate two scholarships per country for African students interested in attending the University for Peace. For its part, the University would continue to work to strengthen its Africa programme.

17. Gender balance was paramount in determining the composition of the University administration and faculty, as well as that of the membership of the Council of the University for Peace. The Secretary-General's appointments of members of the Council of the University, which had attained gender parity, had reaffirmed that approach, a central element of the University's vision.

Draft resolution A/C.4/73/L.7: University for Peace

18. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution contained no programme budget implications.

19. **Mr. Carazo** (Costa Rica) introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that the text contained updated figures reflecting the University's achievements in the period 2015–2018. The preambular paragraphs featured new language noting that the majority of students and alumni were women, outlining the University's new initiatives and underscoring its commitment to support the work of the Organization.

20. **Ms. Sharma** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Bangladesh, Colombia, Cuba, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Montenegro, the Netherlands,

Peru, the Philippines and the Plurinational State of Bolivia had joined the sponsors.

21. *Draft resolution A/C.4/73/L.7 was adopted.*

22. **Mr. Lederman** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of position after the decision, said that his delegation wished to underscore that the 2030 Agenda was non-binding. As such, it did not create or affect rights or obligations under international law or create new financial commitments. The United States recognized the 2030 Agenda as a global framework for sustainable development that could help countries work towards global peace and prosperity. He applauded the call in the Agenda for shared responsibility, including national responsibility, and emphasized that all countries had a role to play in achieving its vision. In accordance with the Agenda, each country must work towards national implementation in accordance with its own national policies and priorities.

23. Paragraph 18 of the 2030 Agenda contained a call on countries to implement the 2030 Agenda in a manner consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law. He underscored his delegation's endorsement of the recognition, contained in paragraph 58 of the Agenda, that implementation of the Agenda must respect and be without prejudice to the independent mandates of other processes and institutions, including negotiations, and did not prejudice or serve as precedent for decisions and actions under way in other forums. For example, the Agenda did not constitute a commitment to provide new market access for goods or services. Lastly, it also did not alter any World Trade Organization agreement or decision, including the agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.