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Seventy-seventh session

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**Special Political and Decolonization Committee
(Fourth Committee)****Summary record of the 26th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 11 November 2022, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Al Hassan (Oman)**Contents**Agenda item 46: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*)Agenda item 47: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (*continued*)Agenda item 124: Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (*continued*)

Completion of the Committee's work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 46: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

(continued) (A/C.4/77/L.9, A/C.4/77/L.10 and A/C.4/77/L.11)

1. **Ms. Joyini** (South Africa), introducing draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.10, said that, in paragraph 6, the General Assembly would renew the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) until 30 June 2026.

2. **Mr. Nasir** (Indonesia), introducing draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.9, said that, in paragraph 17, the General Assembly would decide to consider a gradual increase in the United Nations regular budget allocation to UNRWA to support expenses for operational costs, and invite the Secretary-General to submit a proposal for consideration by the relevant committees at its seventy-eighth session.

3. Introducing draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.11, he said that, in paragraph 2, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to take all appropriate steps for the protection of Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel. In paragraph 5, it would urge the two sides to deal with the issue of Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues within the framework of the final status peace negotiations.

Draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.9: Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

4. **Ms. Ukabiala** (Secretary of the Committee), said that the following delegations had become sponsors: Algeria, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Comoros, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

5. Under the terms of paragraph 17 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to consider a gradual increase in the United Nations regular budget allocation to the Agency that would, in addition to covering international staff requirements, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3331 B (XXIX), be utilizable to support expenses for operational costs related to executive and administrative

management functions of UNRWA. The General Assembly would invite the Secretary-General, accordingly, to submit proposals for consideration by the relevant committees at the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly. Pursuant to that paragraph, the Secretariat would thus propose, in the context of the proposed programme budget, starting with the budget year 2024, a gradual increase in resource requirements to support expenses for operational costs related to executive and administrative management functions of the Agency, in addition to resource requirements to cover the expenses for salaries of international staff, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3331 B (XXIX). Adoption of the draft resolution would therefore give rise to budgetary implications, starting with the proposed programme budget for 2024. However, due to the need for further internal consultations, the Secretariat was currently not in a position to provide estimates of the additional resource requirements that would be proposed for 2024 and for the subsequent budget years. Accordingly, the adoption of draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.9 would not entail any budgetary implications for the proposed programme budget for 2023.

6. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman,

Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Canada, Israel, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America.

Abstaining:

Burundi, Cameroon, Guatemala, Rwanda, Uruguay.

7. Draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.9](#) was adopted by 164 votes to 6, with 5 abstentions.

Draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.10: Assistance to Palestine refugees

8. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

9. **Ms. Ukabiala** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had joined the sponsors: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Comoros, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Estonia, Gambia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden and Yemen.

10. A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic

People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel.

Abstaining:

Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Guatemala, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America, Uruguay.

11. Draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.10](#) was adopted by 165 votes to 1, with 10 abstentions.

Draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.11: Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

12. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

13. **Ms. Ukabiala** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had joined the sponsors: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Comoros, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia,

Maldives, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland and Yemen.

14. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Canada, Israel, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Guatemala, Rwanda, South Sudan, Togo.

15. *Draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.11](#) was adopted by 160 votes to 7, with 7 abstentions.*

16. **Ms. Webster** (Australia) said that, as a long-term supporter of the vital work of UNRWA, her delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.9](#). Australia had recently announced plans to double its contribution to the Agency that financial year, from 10 to 20 million Australian dollars. Its support for the draft resolution did not represent an endorsement of the proposal to consider a gradual increase in the United Nations regular budget allocation to UNRWA, a matter better considered by the Fifth Committee.

17. Her delegation strongly supported the General Assembly's call in the draft resolution for the Agency to further enhance its internal governance and oversight mechanisms to ensure that it was delivering on its mandate with transparency and accountability, and noted the ongoing commitment of UNRWA to neutrality in its operations. In view of the continued level of support for the draft resolution, Australia called on all States to back words with actions and contribute greater funding.

18. Her delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.11](#) because no one should be arbitrarily deprived of their property. It supported the call for both parties to deal with the issue of Palestine refugees' properties and revenues within the framework of final status peace negotiations. Australia continued to strongly support a two-State solution, which could be reached only through a negotiated outcome between the two parties. Accordingly, it encouraged the parties to return to direct negotiations in good faith.

19. **Mr. Weinstein** (United States of America) said that his delegation had once again abstained from voting on the draft resolution on assistance to Palestine refugees ([A/C.4/77/L.10](#)). As the United States remained opposed to efforts to shift the budget of UNRWA from voluntary to assessed contributions, it had voted against draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.9](#). His Government remained the largest single donor to UNRWA, providing nearly \$344 million in 2022, including critical support for education, health and social services. All Member States should back up their rhetorical support for the Agency with actions by increasing their voluntary financial support, especially those that had voted in favour of the draft resolution but provided precious little support to the Agency. His delegation continued to urge UNRWA and United Nations leadership to reform the Agency and uphold its

commitment to the humanitarian principles of neutrality, independence, humanity and impartiality. For its part, the United States Government would continue to work with UNRWA to strengthen its accountability, transparency and consistency with United Nations principles.

Agenda item 47: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (*continued*)

(A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1, A/C.4/77/L.13 and A/C.4/77/L.14)

20. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia), introducing draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1, said that, in addition to reiterating its call for Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with the Charter of the United Nations and all other international legal obligations, the General Assembly would, in paragraph 18, request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the prolonged occupation and colonization by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and its violation of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. In the nearly 20 years since the General Assembly had last asked the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion on the question of Palestine, the situation had only worsened, and the occupying Power had defiantly rejected every entreaty by the international community to cease its violations. The request for an advisory opinion was not a controversial or confrontational response to the situation, but rather a peaceful, civilized, legal initiative to allow the principal international judicial organ to pronounce itself on the matter and offer urgent guidance to the international community in its quest for justice and peace.

21. **Mr. Romero Puentes** (Cuba), introducing draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.13, said that it contained only technical updates.

22. Introducing draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.14, he said that the title of the draft resolution had not been changed since previous sessions, notwithstanding an error that had appeared on the e-deleGATE platform.

23. **Mr. Erdan** (Israel), making a general statement before the voting, said that the international community stood at a crossroads; each Member State could, with the click of a button, choose to be an accomplice in destroying any hope for reconciliation. The long line of one-sided, anti-Israel resolutions adopted year after year by the Committee served the sole purpose of demonizing Israel while absolving the Palestinians – whose hypocrisy knew no limits – of any responsibility for their current situation. The Palestinians, whose

regime obliterated civil liberties and paid terrorists to incentivize the murder of innocent Israeli civilians, had no right to give lessons on human rights or peace to Israel, the most vibrant liberal democracy in the Middle East and a signatory to four peace agreements in the previous two years. For Israel, peace was far more than an empty slogan. Israeli children were educated in tolerance and coexistence, while the Palestinian culture of incitement, hate and violence deliberately taught in schools poisoned the minds of generations.

24. In addition to regurgitating the same blatant fabrications of yore, the draft resolutions contained a far more destructive clause calling to involve the International Court of Justice. After rejecting every single peace initiative, the Palestinians sought to embroil an external body with the excuse that the conflict had not been resolved, a failure due solely to their rejectionism. By co-opting the Court to impose a decision, the Palestinians had the perfect excuse to continue boycotting the negotiating table to perpetuate the conflict. Their unstated precondition for negotiating, which they claimed to be ready to do, was for 100 per cent of their demands to be guaranteed. Involving a judicial organ in a decades-old conflict to dictate one side's demands to the other would ensure many more years of stagnation, which was precisely what the Palestinians wanted, as they had rejected every peace plan, including the United Nations partition plan in 1947.

25. Peace could be achieved only through bilateral negotiations and mutual concessions, not through the draft resolution's unilateral approach or the enlistment of the Organization's politicized, anti-Israel majority for the purpose of imposing the Palestinians' demands. What was more, the draft resolutions referred to the holiest site in Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, Har HaBayit, only by its Muslim name. Rather than an ignorant mistake, the omission was yet another attempt to distort history and erase the bond between the Jewish people and Jerusalem, something Israel would never allow. By doing so, the Palestinians demonstrated that freedom of worship was a value they refused to uphold. All delegations should vote against the draft resolution and, in so doing, oppose destructive falsehoods that would only perpetuate the conflict and stand on the right side of history.

26. **Mr. Weinstein** (United States of America), making a general statement before the voting, said that his delegation maintained that Israelis and Palestinians equally deserved to live safely and securely and enjoy freedom, dignity, justice and prosperity. The United States was firmly committed to supporting the path to a negotiated two-State solution through constructive

measures. Such a solution along the 1967 lines, with mutually agreed land swaps, remained the best way to ensure the future security and prosperity of Israel and fulfil the Palestinians' desire for a State of their own.

27. His delegation continued to have serious concerns about the draft resolutions proposed every year in the Committee. There were no shortcuts to a two-State solution, and that year's draft resolutions contained nothing that would advance peace or create the conditions for negotiations. His Government opposed all draft resolutions that were one-sided and held Israel to a standard not expected of other countries. The failure in the draft resolutions to acknowledge the shared history of the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, a site sacred to both Jews and Muslims, demonstrated that the aim of the draft resolutions was to denigrate Israel, not to help achieve peace.

28. Of particular concern was the request in draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#) for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice. That request was fundamentally inconsistent with prior Security Council resolutions, in which it had been established that negotiations were the pathway to resolving conflicts between Israel and its neighbours. A lasting and just two-State solution could be achieved only through direct negotiations between the parties. Any measures intended to bypass the critical function of negotiations would merely magnify distrust and make a two-State solution less likely. Accordingly, the United States strongly opposed the draft resolution and the request contained therein, and called on other Member States to vote against the package of counterproductive draft resolutions. The General Assembly should seek a new way forward and abandon biased, anti-Israel resolutions that distracted from efforts to achieve peace, as did the alarming establishment of a commission of inquiry by the Human Rights Council in May 2021. While charting a new path could be difficult, there were recent examples of bold initiatives, such as the normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco, and the recent indirect negotiations between Israel and Lebanon, which had resulted in the demarcation of a maritime boundary.

Draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#): Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

29. **The Chair** said that the programme budget implications of the draft resolution were set out in document [A/C.4/77/L.16](#).

30. **Ms. Ukabiala** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had joined the sponsors: Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Djibouti, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

31. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Austria, Canada, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Liberia, Lithuania, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino,

Serbia, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay.

32. *Draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1 was adopted by 98 votes to 17, with 52 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.13: The occupied Syrian Golan

33. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

34. **Ms. Ukabiala** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had joined the sponsors: Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Maldives, Niger, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.

35. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates,

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, Liberia, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Australia, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Madagascar, Malawi, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Panama, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Togo, Tonga, Uruguay.

36. *Draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.13 was adopted by 148 votes to 3, with 22 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/C.4/77/L.14: Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan

37. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no budget implications.

38. **Ms. Ukabiala** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had joined the sponsors: Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Comoros, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

39. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica,

Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Canada, Hungary, Israel, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Czechia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Madagascar, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Togo, Uruguay.

40. Draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.14](#) was adopted by 150 votes to 8, with 14 abstentions.

41. **Mr. Amorín** (Uruguay) said that while his delegation considered that the advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice were valuable international instruments that contributed to the development of public international law, it did not support the proposal to request an advisory opinion from the Court, and therefore dissociated itself from paragraph 18 of draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#). That provision, which had been introduced with very little advance notice and without carrying out broad consultations, would be counterproductive, adding unnecessary tension instead of contributing to resolving the conflict. A just and lasting solution could be attained only through direct bilateral negotiations.

42. **Mr. Frémy** (France), speaking also on behalf of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the

Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden, said that the use of the term "Palestine" could not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and was without prejudice to the individual positions of member States of the European Union on the issue and, therefore, to the question of the validity of any accession to the international instruments referred to in draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#). Furthermore, the European Union as a whole had not expressed a legal view with regard to the term "forced displacement".

43. With respect to the holy sites in Jerusalem, the developments and recurrent violent clashes at the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif were a matter of concern. Recalling the special significance of the holy sites, the European Union called for the status quo of the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif established in 1967 to be upheld, in line with previous understandings and acknowledging the special role of Jordan. The position of the European Union with respect to the draft resolution did not imply a change in its stance on the terminology concerning the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif. While the European Union welcomed the addition of wording reaffirming the special significance of the holy sites and the importance of the city of Jerusalem for the three monotheistic religions, it was important for wording used in reference to the holy sites to reflect the importance and historical significance of both the city of Jerusalem and the holy sites for the three monotheistic religions, as well as to take account of religious and cultural sensitivities. The future choice of language used in draft resolutions might affect the collective support of the European Union for the draft resolutions according to the established voting pattern.

44. Peace and friendship among nations must be based on international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and the obligation to settle international disputes by peaceful means. As the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice played a key role in that respect and in the development of international law. Proposals to request or requests for advisory opinions from the Court should be thoroughly discussed and consulted with the United Nations membership, in a timely manner.

45. **Ms. Webster** (Australia) said that her delegation had voted against draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#) because it did not support a referral to the International Court of Justice and opposed the draft resolution's clear bias against Israel. Parties must take every possible step to defuse tensions and promote conditions conducive to a resumption of peace negotiations and achieving a just and enduring peace agreement. Referring the matter to the International Court of Justice would be unhelpful in

bringing the parties together for negotiation. The Court's advisory jurisdiction should not be used to address bilateral disputes.

46. In view of the importance of respect for all religions and people, her delegation was disappointed that the draft resolution continued the practice of mentioning only the Haram al-Sharif and omitting the Jewish term Temple Mount when referring to the holy sites in Jerusalem. The omission was a failure to recognize the shared and diverse history of Jerusalem.

47. **Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore) said that his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#), in line with its consistent approach to General Assembly resolutions related to Palestine and its long-standing, principled support for a negotiated two-State solution that would allow Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in peace and security. However, it had reservations regarding paragraph 18, in which the General Assembly would seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the questions set out in that paragraph. Its reservation concerned the use of the Court's advisory jurisdiction to bypass the need for a State's consent to submit bilateral political disputes for adjudication. Even if it was legally permissible for the General Assembly to seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice, it was not appropriate to involve the Court in the dispute in that manner. The underlying dispute, which concerned territorial boundaries, could be settled only through direct negotiations between the parties, or by the binding decision of an appropriate international tribunal to whose adjudication both disputing parties had given consent. A request for an advisory opinion required serious consideration and inclusive and open-ended consultations with all delegations, including the parties involved in a dispute. In that instance, there had been no time for proper consideration and inclusive consultations, as the matter had been belatedly added to an existing draft resolution. Lastly, the Haram al-Sharif should be referred to as Temple Mount/Haram Al-Sharif to reflect its shared and diverse history.

48. **Mr. Egas Benavides** (Ecuador) said that his delegation had abstained from voting on draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#) owing to the inclusion, a few days prior to the vote, of a request for the International Court of Justice to issue an advisory opinion. The wording pertaining to that request had not been subject to a consultation process, and there had not been sufficient time to analyse it.

49. **Mr. Edbrooke** (Liechtenstein) said that Liechtenstein was strongly supportive of the advisory opinion function of the International Court of Justice,

which had a central role in giving guidance on questions of public international law. The dispute over the situation in the Middle East clearly entailed questions of that nature. Guidance from the Court on the relevant legal questions could help provide clarity with respect to that and other situations, in addition to contributing to the realization of a solution consistent with international law.

50. Liechtenstein attached the highest value to safeguarding the high standing of the International Court of Justice and the integrity of its proceedings. The request to seek an advisory opinion from the Court was a decision of the highest importance that affected all States committed to upholding the rule of law and promoting and ensuring respect for international law. His delegation was therefore concerned that the request had been inserted with little notice and without consultation of the membership as a whole, even though it had ramifications that extended well beyond the conflict in the Middle East. The request would have been strengthened by the collective wisdom of a larger group of Member States, in particular, those already supportive of its aims. Such a process could also have fostered a greater sense of ownership over matters pertaining to international law. Liechtenstein had therefore decided to abstain from voting on draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#).

51. **Mr. Fepuleai** (New Zealand) said that New Zealand had a long-held policy on Israeli-Palestinian issues and shared the concerns expressed in draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#). Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were a violation of international law and imperilled the two-State solution. However, his delegation had abstained from voting on the draft resolution. It regretted that the proposal to request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice proposal had not been circulated to members in sufficient time to allow for appropriate consideration. It also had concerns with the nature of the question as drafted and, in particular, did not agree with the legal characterization of the situation, in subparagraph 18 (a), as an annexation under international law. Despite those concerns, New Zealand was confident that the Court's approach to the question would be consistent with international law.

52. **Mr. Nishiyama** (Japan) said that Japan fully understood the desire of Palestinians to seek all available avenues, in the light of the stalemate in the peace process and the dire situation on the ground. It was also necessary to consider carefully which would be the most appropriate approach to achieving a lasting peace in the Middle East.

53. After careful consideration, Japan had decided to abstain from voting on draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#). His Government supported the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and a two-State solution. Japan had also supported General Assembly resolution [ES-10/15](#), which had been adopted after the issuance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. That advisory opinion continued to contribute to the rule of law, including by reaffirming the illegality of acquisition of territory by force.

54. Japan once again urged the parties to exert further efforts to build mutual trust, exercise maximum restraint, avoid any unilateral action that hindered the resumption of peace talks, and resume and advance direct negotiation in order to realize a two-State solution at the earliest possible time.

55. **Mr. Kiboino** (Kenya) said that Kenya welcomed any initiatives consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and existing resolutions that could generate positive momentum. A lasting solution to the conflict would require both parties to engage in direct bilateral negotiations and cease all activities on the ground. In line with its principled position, Kenya had voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole. However, his delegation disassociated itself from paragraph 18 of the draft resolution; the paragraph, as currently framed, was too prescriptive and pre-empted the proposed process involving the International Court of Justice. It therefore risked creating another barrier to real movement from both parties, instead of improving the prospects for resuming negotiations.

56. **Mr. Ruppacher** (Austria) said that both Israelis and Palestinians deserved to live in peace and security and have their human rights respected. All sides must uphold international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Wording referring to the holy sites of Jerusalem should reflect the importance and historical significance of the sites for the three monotheistic religions, and should respect religious and cultural sensitivities. It was therefore regrettable that only the term Haram al-Sharif had been used to refer to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif site.

57. Austria was strongly committed to strengthening the rule of law at the national and international levels and believed that a rules-based international system was an essential precondition for lasting peace, security, economic development and social progress. While the possibility of requesting advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice, as the principal judicial

organ of the United Nations, was essential, his delegation regretted the manner in which the proposal for an advisory opinion had been included in the draft resolution. Such a request must be based on a thorough analysis and discussion among Member States. However, time had not allowed for such a discussion or for the concrete formulation of the questions, a fact that was all the more regrettable because the advisory opinion concerned not only the parties but all States Members of the United Nations. Moreover, an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice would not help the two parties relaunch a political process but would instead further confirm the impression that one country was scrutinized disproportionately often by international forums. For those reasons, Austria had been unable to support the draft resolution.

58. **Mr. Ghelich** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the adoption of all draft resolutions under agenda items 46 and 47 by an overwhelming majority was indicative of the widespread support among Committee members for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and for holding the occupying Israeli regime accountable for its crimes against Palestinians, in particular, women and children. Over the previous seven decades, the question of Palestine had been the core issue facing the Middle East and had directly or indirectly affected the other problems in the region. The killing of innocent children, women and elderly people, including in Gaza, had shocked the world; and they were merely one example of the suffering of the Palestinian people over the previous decades.

59. Since the tragedy of Palestine had occurred, various concerned countries, the United Nations and other organizations had taken numerous initiatives to address the crisis and mitigate the plight of the Palestinian people. Resolutions had been adopted condemning the suffering faced by the Palestinian people, various plans for peace had been proposed, and fact-finding missions had been established. However, support for the Israeli regime on the part of certain powers had prevented the international community from finding a just solution to the crisis.

60. Only by ending the Israeli occupation, restoring the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, facilitating the return of Palestine refugees to their homeland and establishing an independent and viable State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital would it be possible to bring decades of conflict and instability in the Middle East to an end and establish a durable peace.

61. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the State of Palestine was grateful to all

delegations that had voted in favour of the draft resolutions. The overwhelming majority in support of the draft resolutions reflected the unwavering international consensus on the question of Palestine. Mobilizing the components of the international law-based order, including international justice, was a legitimate, peaceful mechanism to confront violent, illegal actions. His people wanted and deserved freedom. It appreciated the long-standing support of nations that, informed by their own struggles against oppression, had remained true to their principles. Nothing justified supporting or tacitly condoning the Israeli occupation and annexation and the displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian people.

62. In a fit of hysteria, Israel had persisted in insulting, berating and threatening sovereign States. Seeking to bend international law to its gross violations, Israel demanded that countries look away from its crimes and apply a double standard to it. The Charter of the United Nations prohibited the annexation of land by force and enshrined the right of peoples to self-determination. Both norms had been violated by Israel in its bid to impose an occupation without end with the aim of annexing land and expelling a people. Nevertheless, the day would surely come when young Palestinians would fly the flag of Palestine on the churches, mosques and walls of Al-Quds al-Sharif.

63. **Ms. Gui Dan** (China) said that China had voted in favour of the draft resolutions on the question of Palestine. A comprehensive, just and lasting solution, the peaceful coexistence of the State of Palestine and Israel, and the common development of the Arab and Jewish peoples were in the shared interest of both parties and the long-term goal of regional stability.

64. Her Government supported the Palestinian people in its pursuit of a fully sovereign and independent State of Palestine on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The two-State solution must be upheld, and negotiations between Palestine and Israel on an equal footing must be promoted, in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative. The international community should remain objective and impartial and step up efforts to foster peace.

65. In draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#), the International Court of Justice was requested to give an advisory opinion. The Court should strictly abide by its own Statute and the Charter of the United Nations in lawfully exercising its advisory jurisdiction.

66. **Mr. Croker** (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom remained committed to working with both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to advance a

peaceful two-State solution with Jerusalem as the shared capital. In view of the alarming instability in the West Bank, all sides should work together to urgently de-escalate the situation. His delegation had abstained from voting on draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#) because it did not believe that a referral to the International Court of Justice would be helpful in bringing the parties back to dialogue. Moreover, it was inappropriate, without the consent of both parties, to ask the Court for an advisory opinion on what was essentially a bilateral dispute. The proposal of an advisory opinion from the Court on the Occupied Palestinian Territory had been a recommendation from a report of the commission of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council in 2021. The United Kingdom once again regretted the establishment of the commission, which furthered the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel and was not subject to a time limit.

67. The draft resolution also referred to the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount site in Jerusalem in purely Islamic terms, an approach with which his delegation had long registered its disagreement. Future resolutions should adequately reflect the particular significance of Jerusalem and the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount site for many groups around the world, especially the Abrahamic faiths of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The United Kingdom was committed to preserving the religious status quo and valued the important role of Jordan as custodian of the holy sites in Jerusalem.

68. **Mr. Costa Chaves** (Timor-Leste) said that his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution [A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1](#) to reaffirm its solidarity with the Palestinian people in its quest to achieve its inalienable rights and build a future of peace, justice, security and dignity for both Palestinians and Israelis. However, Timor-Leste disassociated itself from the recent substantial update to the draft resolution, especially paragraph 18 thereof, which contained an urgent request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice. The request might undermine the peace process, especially efforts to find a two-State solution.

Agenda item 124: Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (continued) (A/C.4/77/L.15)

Draft decision [A/C.4/77/L.15](#): Proposed programme of work and timetable of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) for the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly

69. **Mr. Kris** (United States of America) said that his delegation firmly believed that some of the methods which the Committee had adopted during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, particularly

the joint general debate, had helped to make its work more rational and efficient. As the Committee returned to its pre-pandemic working methods, it was worth considering how to optimize the time which delegations shared in the same meeting room, in order to make the Committee's work as efficient as possible and best serve delegations, capitals and the peoples they represented. His delegation would endorse the provisional programme of work, as it favoured continued informal discussion of how best to revitalize the Committee's work and eventual consideration of other potentially constructive approaches, such as taking action on draft resolutions at the end of the session. Even as a larger delegation with sufficient staff to cover the Committee's proceedings, the effort was on occasion time-consuming and confusing.

70. **Mr. Alvarez** (Argentina) said that in view of the wide range of topics addressed by the Committee, his delegation was concerned about attempts to alter its working methods without sufficient consultation and in a manner that risked undermining its work. The changes made to the Committee's schedule and working methods during the seventy-fifth and seventy-sixth sessions of the General Assembly, including the joint general debate, had been exceptional in nature, a response to the extraordinary circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and, as such, did not establish precedents for future sessions. The Committee's thematic debates should be retained, as they were the most efficient manner for delegations to exchange substantive views on the range of topics on its agenda. Furthermore, the specificity of the Committee's consideration of the agenda items related to decolonization must be preserved, as must the amount of time allotted to that exercise. The Committee already considered the five agenda items on decolonization together.

71. Reforms aimed at restricting dialogue and preventing Member States from expressing their views on each item in depth were not the way forward and would not help the Committee to better address the various issues on its agenda. Efficiency would be achieved by resolving pending questions and allowing the international community and Member States to discuss issues in a thorough manner, not by reducing the number of meetings or the length of statements. There was a need for more debate that was broader in scope, more interactive and more inclusive. Argentina therefore endorsed the provisional programme of work contained in [A/C.4/77/L.15](#), which was based on pre-pandemic working methods, and called on all delegations to do likewise. The Committee's working methods had been developed over time, on the basis of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. They

reflected the Committee's experience and were suited to its particular characteristics. Any improvement to working methods should be the product of a consensus among Member States after careful deliberations, with the aim of strengthening, not weakening, the Committee's work.

72. **Mr. Rios Sánchez** (Mexico), welcoming the unprecedented engagement from delegations on the question of revitalizing the work of the General Assembly, said that the Committee should have a discussion and exchange of views and evaluate different aspects of its work, including the programme of work. Resuming the pre-pandemic modus operandi could lead to rigidity and stagnation. More dialogue and negotiation were needed. Of the draft resolutions adopted at the present session, very few had been the subject of negotiations. While general debates were a necessary avenue for delegations to express national positions, mechanisms for genuine dialogue among delegations should be found. In interactive dialogues between Secretariat officials and delegations, there was minimal participation from the latter. Delegations should focus on the interactive part of dialogue, something that would enable them to go beyond reiterating positions, without denying them the prerogative to do so.

73. While the consideration of the decolonization items should be retained in its current form, owing to their specificity, other aspects of the Committee's work could be reviewed. Delegations should resume the informal discussion of working methods that had begun at the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. His delegation would join consensus on the provisional programme of work. It suggested merging the Committee's organizational session with its first meeting of the main part of the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, in order to allow delegations to prepare after the high-level segment. In addition, in order to make the Committee's work more efficient, it might be useful to adopt all draft resolutions at the end of the session.

74. **Mr. Romero Puentes** (Cuba) said that the nature and variety of topics dealt with by the Committee set it apart from the other Main Committees. Its working methods suited it, as they were based on the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the cumulative experience and balance struck over years. His delegation firmly opposed efforts to overhaul those working methods in an endeavour to diminish the Committee's importance. Improvements could be made to minor aspects of the Committee's work in order to strengthen it, by consensus among all delegations. It was surprising that changes were being insisted upon only

for the Fourth Committee, while the budgetary considerations that had been cited affected all the Main Committees.

75. Consideration of the working methods of the General Assembly and its Main Committees was a process guided by Member States that required substantive debate and exchange of views. The overarching process concerned all the Main Committees, not just the Fourth Committee. Moreover, the process could not be superficial; existing relationships between different items must be taken into consideration, as well as the value which those items added to the Committee's agenda. Working methods that had already yielded tangible results in the area of decolonization should not be restructured artificially with the pretext of avoiding duplication of effort. Attempts to integrate approaches should not alter or call into question the mandate of certain bodies integral to the Organization's work.

76. Throughout the process, States must retain the sovereign right to introduce new topics and resolutions under General Assembly and Main Committee agenda items, as appropriate. The lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic involved adaptations that had played an essential role in the Committee's work during a severe health crisis. Those exceptional circumstances did not establish precedents. Following the return to normalcy, the Committee's traditional procedures, which it had departed from only at the seventy-fifth and seventy-sixth sessions of the General Assembly, must be retained and preserved for future use. General debates were indispensable to the Committee's work. Parity among the six official languages must be ensured.

77. **Ms. Beretta Tassano** (Uruguay) said that lessons had indeed been learned from the pandemic, and there was certainly room for improvement in the Organization's working methods. However, their revitalization must not come at the expense of the topics addressed by the Committee, particularly those related to decolonization, which were highly specific and sensitive in nature. Her delegation was open to a broad informal discussion of working methods, but such a discussion should in no way undermine the visibility and thorough discussion of the topics addressed by the Committee.

78. **Mr. Koudri** (Algeria) said that the Committee's programme of work for the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly had been drawn up on the basis of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, best practices and experience, all of which had demonstrated the effectiveness of the Committee's working methods. While the discussion on the revitalization of the work of

the General Assembly in general was a useful one, any consideration of changes to working methods must be consistent with the rules of procedure, established practice and experience. In particular, the established working methods should be retained for the consideration of questions related to decolonization, which was the core issue before the Committee. Member States must be given more space and time to consider each of the Non-Self-Governing Territories equally, separately and thoroughly and to convey their national positions.

79. During the pandemic, the General Assembly and its Main Committees had been obliged to adapt to the situation. It had been clear at the time that such changes did not set a precedent. His delegation welcomed the return to the status quo ante. A joint general debate might work for the other Main Committees but would not suit the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, which, as its name indicated, was and must remain special.

80. **Ms. Pichardo Urbina** (Nicaragua) said that sufficient time and space must be devoted to consideration of each of the items on the Committee's agenda. Her delegation had joined others in agreeing to be flexible with regard to pandemic-era working methods, bearing in mind the exceptional circumstances. However, the current conditions allowed the Committee to conduct its activities in a normal manner. Nicaragua therefore did not support diluting or limiting the consideration of such important questions.

81. **Ms. Baños Müller** (El Salvador) said that the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly merited the continued attention, commitment and constructive engagement of all Member States. Sufficient time must therefore be devoted to discussing the working methods of the Main Committees, one of the primary aspects of the revitalization process. The Committee should consider convening a substantive debate among Member States during the current session, enabling delegations to exchange views and make innovative, action-oriented proposals, with a view to continuing to improve the Committee's working methods. The recent sessions had demonstrated that the General Assembly and its Main Committees were capable of adapting to complex circumstances in a timely manner with the requisite political will and a firm commitment to the work of the Organization.

82. **Mr. Croker** (United Kingdom) said, without prejudice to the draft programme of work before the Committee, that the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly should be discussed substantively within each Main Committee. Member States could

improve the work of the Organization and its impact on the ground only by being humble and thinking about ways to do things better, an attempt that had yet to be made. Delegations should therefore refrain from bringing preconceived ideas into the discussion and consider potential avenues for improvement.

83. **Mr. Elhomosany** (Egypt) said that his delegation endorsed the points made by the delegations of Algeria, Argentina and Cuba concerning the importance of retaining the Committee's current working methods, which took into account the needs of smaller delegations. The procedures adopted over the previous two sessions had been strictly temporary and as such, did not need to be adopted as standard.

84. **The Chair** said that the diverging views expressed on the agenda item under consideration reflected the lack of consensus among delegations. Further consultations were therefore needed before the Committee could make a decision on the way forward. In line with the mandate set out in General Assembly resolution [58/316](#), whereby each Main Committee was to adopt a provisional programme of work at the end of the session for the next session to help them better to plan, prepare and organize and review the related documentation requirements, he suggested that the Committee should adopt the programme of work for the Committee at the seventy-eighth session, which would be finalized by the Bureau of the Committee for that session.

85. *Draft decision [A/C.4/77/L.15](#) was adopted.*

Completion of the Committee's work

86. **The Chair**, after presenting an overview of the activities of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), said that the Committee had completed its work for the main part of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.