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Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Makayat-Safouesse (Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 63 (continued)

Use of the veto

Special report of the Security Council (A/78/861)

Mr. Rae (Canada): We convene today because the Russian Federation yet again cynically abused its veto power at the Security Council (see S/PV. 9616). This time — and we all recall that we were here just a week ago — Russia prevented the adoption of draft resolution S/2024/302, capably facilitated by the United States and Japan and aimed at preventing a nuclear arms race in outer space, which surely is a good idea. Let us think for a moment on the consequences for humankind if a weapon of mass destruction were detonated above us and the fact that a permanent member of the Security Council with a nuclear arsenal is willing to gamble with those consequences. The draft resolution that Russia vetoed called upon all of us to ensure that the uses of outer space are entirely peaceful. It called upon all of us to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and by international law in outer space. Is it any surprise that Russia, which holds the United Nations Charter in such contempt here on Earth, would object to its application in outer space?

Russia says — and I refer to the official social media account of its Permanent Mission — that the use of the veto itself should not be criticized, but that the unwillingness of some Security Council members to hear the views

of others and find compromise and balanced solutions should. As we understand it, the United States and Japan conducted an extensive and transparent negotiation process spanning several weeks. As a testament to that process, 13 Security Council members voted in favour of the draft resolution. Russia stood alone in blocking it. A total of 65 Member States from all regional groups co-sponsored the draft resolution — pointing to the seriousness that many of us attach to that critical issue. Russia stands alone in objecting to our collective wishes.

(spoke in French)

Canada deeply regrets that the draft resolution, which sought to maintain and reaffirm the existing commitments set out in the Outer Space Treaty, was vetoed.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia has a particular responsibility to maintain international peace and security, one that it has not assumed in this case and in others. Russia is calling for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument to prevent the placement of weapons in space. Yet, at the same time, it is blocking a draft resolution affirming the only existing obligation not to place weapons — the most destructive weapons — in orbit. In all honesty, its position makes no sense.

Russia is also trying to divert attention by focusing on a treaty. Canada and other countries have made it clear that a treaty banning weapons in space must have a scope, definitions and a method of verification. The Russian and Chinese proposals do not contain those

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elements. If we add to this Russia's veto and China's abstention, it becomes clear that those two countries are not interested in genuine disarmament in space.

(spoke in English)

For treaties and laws to be effective, there must be some degree of trust that States will abide by their obligations. What is Russia telling us when it cannot accept a draft resolution that merely reaffirms existing international commitments by which it must already abide? By its actions and by its words, Russia is telling us clearly that it believes that it is above the law. It is asking us to believe that it is really interested in a treaty when it is not even interested in a resolution. We suggest that perhaps it is time for Russia to come right back down to Earth.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and the group statement delivered by the representative of New Zealand. Additionally, I personally align myself with the great Robert Rae, who just spoke.

Let me add three short points.

First, while we appreciate the opportunity to hold Security Council members accountable for their voting behaviour in the General Assembly, it is unfortunate that these debates have to happen so often. We came together recently in relation to conflict situations in Ukraine, Syria, Mali, Gaza and even on the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Now we are gathered here to discuss draft resolution S/2024/302, proposed by Japan and the United States under the agenda item "Non-proliferation". We regret that the veto was cast by the Russian Federation. Based on the amendment introduced by the Russian Federation, it seems that the veto was cast because of the perceived scope, but not content of the draft resolution. In our view, the right to veto puts a special responsibility on the five permanent members of the Council. A veto without objection to the content, as such, is of grave concern.

Secondly, Austria would have welcomed an emphasis, in the draft resolution proposed by Japan and the United States, on the grave consequences of a detonation of a nuclear weapon or the use of any other kind of weapon of mass destruction in outer space. Nuclear weapons have catastrophic humanitarian consequences, wherever an explosion occurs. Their

humanitarian consequences know no borders and would affect us all. We would have welcomed a Council resolution certifying that.

Thirdly — and something that we should all be able to agree on — it is in the common interest of all States that all activities in the exploration and use of outer space are carried out in accordance with international law, including, of course, the Charter of the United Nations, in order to maintain international peace and security and promote international cooperation and understanding. The fundamental obligations of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, including the undertaking under article 4, not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, and the principles of cooperation and due regard of article 9, play an immensely positive role for all Member States and for humankind to achieve. Let me stress that any detonation of a nuclear weapon or other kind of weapon of mass destruction in outer space would constitute a clear violation of articles 1 and 9 of the Outer Space Treaty and would give rise to liability under the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects.

Respect for the rule of law and compliance with the Outer Space Treaty and other relevant instruments of international law are crucial to preventing an arms race in outer space. We, as the international community, need to be proactive in tackling the rapid developments in outer space. We cannot allow geopolitical tensions or forums held hostage for decades to sit idly by while technology races forward. The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space also play an important role in that regard and should be made use of fully and developed further. Austria, of course, has ratified all five outer space treaties, and I conclude by encouraging other States to do the same.

Ms. Lee Hyun Goo (Republic of Korea): When the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies was signed in 1967, the international community was already cognizant of the potential impact and benefits of space technologies for all. Today it has become a profound reality.

Indeed, outer space unlocked a new horizon of opportunity for humankind, with space-based technologies and assets such as satellites becoming the drivers of sustainable development, in all aspects. Therefore, any actions that hinder the peaceful uses of outer space can have far-reaching, irreversible consequences of an unprecedented magnitude. And a nuclear detonation in space may constitute a serious threat to everyone's right to the safe, secure and sustainable uses of outer space.

It was in that context the Security Council strived to adopt a resolution banning the placement of weapons of mass destruction in outer space, the first of its kind. With the cross-regional support of 65 co-sponsors, 13 Council members, including the Republic of Korea, voted in favour of draft resolution S/2024/302, put forward by the United States and Japan. However, we deeply regret that this crucial and timely draft resolution could not be adopted due to a veto wielded by one permanent member.

This veto undermines the collective work of the Security Council, which was the outcome of weeks of consultations and compromises made possible by the flexibility of the penholders for the sake of achieving consensus on this important subject matter. Yet the veto added another case of unjustly deprived opportunities for the Security Council. The draft resolution, had it been adopted, could have reinforced our common commitment to a peaceful, sustainable, safe and secure space environment. The Council also could have taken a meaningful step to address the emerging issue related to outer space through a timely resolution that complements and reinforces ongoing discussions in other disarmament forums, which is only logical, especially when the subject matter is an important one.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea would like to emphasize that the Security Council, with its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, has the rightful duty to address and engage with emerging challenges in new security domains, such as space security and cybersecurity. As we strive to make the Security Council more agile and relevant in this rapidly changing world, the Republic of Korea stands ready to work with other members of the Council in that endeavour.

Mr. Svercsok (Hungary): We are in the new era of exploration and the use of outer space. Space assets have now become indispensable; we depend on them around

the clock. That development brings with it a challenging global security environment that reflects the complexity faced by the international community in the area of space security. The landscape of strategic competition is evolving, accompanied by a rise in associated risks. Geopolitical tensions on Earth are gradually expanding into the realm of outer space, and regrettably, the peaceful use of outer space is encountering challenges. It is vital that we do our utmost to keep outer space an arena for global international cooperation and not a theatre for an arms race.

As a nation with 78 years of space history, Hungary attaches great importance to the peaceful use of outer space. We therefore supported the draft resolution on weapons of mass destruction in outer space (S/2024/302). We find it regrettable that a veto was cast (see S/PV.9616).

The peaceful use of outer space should be at the centre of all space activities. We must be cautious, lest that peaceful purpose be jeopardized by a nuclear detonation in outer space and prevent States from benefiting from the use of satellites for agriculture, the economy, weather and other core functions. Therefore, the prohibition on the placement of nuclear weapons in outer space — a core point of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies — must be upheld.

Neither do we see merit in the development of nuclear weapons or other kinds of weapons of mass destruction designed to be placed in outer space. Furthermore, we urge all States to uphold and promote universal accession to, and compliance with, the Treaty, and we appeal to all Member States that have not yet done so to become parties to it without delay and without conditions.

Mr. Feruță (Romania): Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and the group statement delivered by the representative of New Zealand, and I would like to make the following additional points.

Romania joined 65 States Members of the United Nations in co-sponsoring the Security Council draft resolution on weapons of mass destruction in outer space, put forward by the United States and Japan (S/2024/302). We welcomed the draft resolution as a legitimate expression of our shared goal of preventing an arms race in outer space and ensuring its exploration and

use for peaceful purposes. The draft resolution recalled the central obligations under the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, particularly those obligations set out in article IV, which calls on States not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction. The draft resolution further calls on Member States not to develop nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction specifically designed to be placed in orbit around the Earth, and it does so for a very good reason: we need a safe and secure outer space. We have far too many challenging areas on Earth to create instability in space.

Space security is a matter of common responsibility and is in the interest of all States. Romania deeply regrets the veto cast by the Russian Federation on the draft resolution on weapons of mass destruction in outer space (see S/PV.9616). The draft resolution encapsulated a clear message against further erosion of the global international security architecture by reaffirming the importance of upholding the Outer Space Treaty for international peace and security. It contained principles that were already codified and that we all could have reaffirmed. States Members of the United Nations have obligations under the Outer Space Treaty, including on the non-placement in outer space of any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction. The consequences of a nuclear detonation in outer space are unthinkable, and the impact would be no lesser than that of one on the ground.

The Outer Space Treaty and the guiding principles developed in the United Nations framework are the cornerstone of the global governance of outer space. Full compliance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and with the Outer Space Treaty, as called for by the draft resolution, remains the prerequisite for the trust and confidence necessary to further strengthen space security and prevent an arms race in outer space. As a firm believer in effective and responsible multilateralism, Romania remains fully committed to contributing constructively to our collective endeavours to prevent threats in outer space and to the peaceful exploration and use of outer space.

Mrs. Zalabata Torres (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly is meeting on this occasion to debate the veto that was cast in the Security Council meeting of 24 April 2024 (see S/PV.9616),

convened under the agenda item “Non-proliferation”, on the draft resolution contained in document S/2024/302, which had been submitted by the United States of America and Japan. Colombia regrets that, owing to the use of the veto, the draft resolution on weapons of mass destruction in outer space, which Colombia decided to co-sponsor and whose objective was to affirm the obligation to comply with the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, was not adopted.

In various international forums on that subject, such as the General Assembly, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, our country has indicated its unqualified commitment to the exclusively peaceful use and exploration of outer space. We have stressed the need to ensure the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, and in that regard, we share the concern about a potential arms race in outer space, which would evidently be unacceptable.

Colombia believes that it is necessary to focus all efforts on avoiding that scenario and preserving a peaceful space environment for future generations. We are facing unprecedented international security challenges, including the nuclear threat and the risk of an arms race in space. Political actions and instruments to address those security concerns are urgently required in order to make progress towards building and fostering the confidence that we so desperately need to revitalize the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

In Colombia’s view, the convening of this plenary meeting demonstrates once again that the veto is an imperial, undemocratic and unjust prerogative that constrains the legitimacy of the Security Council and limits the Council’s effectiveness fulfilling its mandate of maintaining international peace and security. Colombia’s position on the veto has always been clear and consistent since the time of the 1945 San Francisco Conference, at which we voted against conferring a right of veto, as we regarded that instrument as antithetical to the principle of sovereign equality, which lies as the heart of the Charter of the United Nations, and we foresaw the adverse effects that such future power would entail. In the view of my country, the abolition of the veto is a necessary goal towards which we must strive. In the meantime, we underscore

the need to consolidate and broaden Member States' commitment to mechanisms that limit the use of the veto and promote accountability whenever one is cast, in particular in cases of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity — atrocities upon which we have a collective responsibility to act. We refer specifically to the French-Mexican initiative, the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group code of conduct, the "Uniting for peace" mechanism, the veto initiative and Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter.

Mr. Miller (Israel): The discussion being conducted here today provides Israel with the opportunity to express its support for Security Council draft resolution S/2024/302, on weapons of mass destruction in outer space, initiated by the United States and Japan (see S/PV.9616).

The abiding and common interest of all humankind must be in conducting the exploration and use of outer space in a safe and secure manner, while promoting the sustainable development of the entire global community so as to leave no one behind. The Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, must remain the cornerstone of the international legal regime governing outer space. It is important that States that have not yet signed or ratified the Outer Space Treaty do so. It is also of paramount importance that States uphold their obligations under all articles of the Outer Space Treaty. That is essential for maintaining a secure and safe outer space for humankind in its entirety.

In addition, Israel attaches importance to the principle set out in draft resolution S/2024/302 that stresses the need to develop various means of effectively preventing an arms race in outer space in all its aspects, including through political commitments. We urge all States to continue discussing that cardinal matter.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): Ukraine aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of the European Union in its capacity as observer and the representative of New Zealand on behalf of a group of Member States (see A/78/PV.78).

Today the General Assembly meets under the veto initiative once again because Russia is continuing to abuse its illegitimate presence in a permanent seat of the Security Council by undermining the authority of that organ with regard to maintaining international peace and security. On 24 April, Russia vetoed draft

resolution S/2024/302, submitted by Japan and the United States (see S/PV.9616), which would have been the first resolution on outer space ever to have been adopted by the Security Council. The draft resolution, blocked by Russia, reaffirmed the obligations of all States parties not to place any objects carrying nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in orbit around the Earth, in accordance with the Outer Space Treaty. Draft resolution S/2024/302 placed particular focus on the prohibition of the development of nuclear weapons specifically designed for placement in outer space. Moreover, the document would have helped prevent the catastrophic consequences of a potential nuclear detonation in space, which could destroy satellites vital to socioeconomic activities on Earth. We would like to stress that the draft resolution was supported and co-sponsored by a large cross-regional group of 65 Member States.

Ukraine reaffirms that existing international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and international humanitarian law, is applicable in outer space. The 1967 Treaty remains a cornerstone of the legal regime governing outer space activity. However, only 115 States are parties to the Treaty. In recent years, the international community has witnessed an increase in security threats endangering the long-term sustainability of space as an environment. Certain States have displayed new, hostile and dangerous space-related capabilities. In particular, Russia conducted a destructive test in 2021, using ground-launched direct-ascent anti-satellite missiles, which led to space debris in low Earth orbit.

Given Russia's persistent violations of its arms control obligations and its destabilizing policy vis-à-vis various States and its ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, we believe that Moscow's veto of the draft resolution indicates that Russia is hiding something from the international community and may at any point take destructive steps contrary to its legally binding obligations under the Outer Space Treaty. We cannot agree with the view that the issue of security in outer space, in particular the placement of weapons of mass destruction, should be discussed exclusively within the General Assembly, its subsidiary organs and the Conference on Disarmament. In that regard, it is important to stress that the Security Council has the primary responsibility for addressing threats to international peace and security, including those

stemming from nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction specifically designed for placement in outer space.

In conclusion, Ukraine will continue to advocate for effective measures at the international level aimed at improving security in outer space and preventing the militarization of that domain.

Mr. Gómez Hernández (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We find it regrettable that the use of the veto once again thwarted action by the Security Council (see S/PV.9616), this time in relation to draft resolution S/2024/302, on weapons of mass destruction in outer space. Spain supports all initiatives aimed at limiting use of the veto, such as the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group code of conduct and the French-Mexican initiative concerning cases of mass atrocities, which seek reform of the Security Council so as to promote the elimination of the veto.

Together with the great majority of the international community, one of Spain's priorities is to uphold and bolster the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, which is crucial to international peace and security. That is why my country co-sponsored Security Council draft resolution S/2024/302. The possible placement of nuclear weapons in outer space would be a threat to international peace and security, would be incompatible with the obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and would constitute a grave violation of the Outer Space Treaty, under which States undertake not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kind of weapon of mass destruction.

The possible placement of nuclear weapons in outer space would pose an unacceptable risk to achieving the goals set by the "Space2030" agenda and to the long-term sustainability of outer space activity. That is why, notwithstanding Russia's irresponsible veto, Spain welcomes the very wide support that was demonstrated for draft resolution S/2024/302, which reaffirms the fundamental principles of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, and for the treaties and principles that must govern the activities of States in their exploration and use of outer space.

Ms. Jurečko (Slovenia): Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union in its capacity as observer (see A/78/PV.78).

Slovenia welcomes this opportunity to discuss the use of the veto in the Security Council on the basis of resolution 76/262, on the so-called veto initiative. It is deeply concerning that we find ourselves convening already for the fifth time this year to discuss the use of the veto (see S/PV.9616), which blocked the adoption of draft resolution S/2024/302, on an issue that the overwhelming majority of the Security Council members consider to be important for the maintenance of international peace and security. Slovenia supports the efforts aimed at curtailing the use of the veto, as we believe that the right of the veto is not a privilege but a power that carries with it the weight of responsibility, transparency and full accountability.

Furthermore, as a space-faring nation and a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Slovenia entered the negotiations on the draft resolution on weapons of mass destruction in outer space, as submitted by Japan and the United States, in good faith, making difficult concessions to safeguard a space environment that is both safe and secure. The text of the draft resolution underscored the pivotal role of the United Nations. It highlighted the significance of international space law, notably the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, as the cornerstone of the international legal framework governing outer space activities for the collective benefit of humankind. It embodied effective multilateralism, both on Earth and in outer space. For that reason, Slovenia decided to co-sponsor the draft resolution. If adopted, it would have conveyed a strong message on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and on the importance of safeguarding the long-term use of space for peaceful purposes. It would have laid the foundation for our efforts to maintain peace and security beyond Earth's atmosphere by promoting the peaceful exploration and utilization of outer space for the benefit of all humankind.

For those reasons we deeply regret the use of the veto, which hindered our collective efforts to prevent the potential weaponization of outer space. The peaceful use and exploration of outer space represents the height of humankind's imagination and aspirations. Moreover, even our everyday lives are ever more dependent on the use of space-based technology — whether using satellites for navigation, forecasting weather, managing natural resources, mitigating climate change or keeping in touch with family and friends online. Throughout history, we have seen that the keystones to humankind's greatest achievements have been collaboration and

cooperation. From constructing the most advanced telescopes to sending joint missions to the International Space Station, we have demonstrated that with that mindset there are almost no limits to what we can achieve for the benefit of all humankind, both for us here today and for future generations.

Slovenia will continue to oppose the deployment of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in outer space and will contribute constructively and positively to efforts to ensure the peaceful use and exploration of outer space for the benefit of us all.

Mrs. Janina (Albania): Albania aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union in its capacity as observer (see A/78/PV.78).

Albania joins other Member States in condemning the use of the veto by Russia (see S/PV.9616) of draft resolution S/2024/302, proposed by Japan and United States on weapons of mass destruction in outer space, as we believe that the use of the veto and the non-adoption by the Security Council of its first-ever draft resolution on outer space weakens international peace and security. The matter of nuclear weapons in space affects us all. That is why Albania supported and co-sponsored the draft resolution, as did other Member States from all over the world, and we are disappointed with the blocking of that initiative.

The draft resolution, if adopted, would have strengthened and upheld the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Outer space has witnessed a surge in security challenges over recent years, with threats that endanger the long-term sustainability of the space environment. Space security should remain a global goal for all countries. Recently, we have been following with deep concern information and warnings from reliable sources on preparations for the potential deployment of nuclear weapons in space that could threaten other satellites. That would be a clear violation of the Outer Space Treaty, which prohibits weapons of mass destruction in space. Placing a nuclear weapon in orbit would be unprecedented, unacceptable and deeply dangerous. In the light of those developments, the Russian veto against draft resolution S/2024/302 only increases our concerns.

We firmly believe that preventing an arms race in outer space is a prerequisite to prevent it from becoming an area of conflict. Given the increasing reliance on satellites for various crucial functions, such as communication, navigation and monitoring,

ensuring the security and stability of outer space is an imperative. It is crucial for all nations to uphold their obligations under international treaties and work towards maintaining outer space as a peaceful and cooperative domain. In that regard, concrete efforts are needed based on political commitments and legally binding instruments, as well as the responsible behaviour of all actors.

Mr. Uzunovski (North Macedonia): North Macedonia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union in its capacity as observer (see A/78/PV.78).

We are among the last speakers today. The first speaker today was Russia, but its explanation of the use of the veto (see S/PV.9616) was not convincing. Given the co-sponsorship of draft resolution S/2024/302 by 65 countries, including my own, it is difficult to understand the Russian opposition. Russia's role as a permanent member of the Security Council cannot be understated. However, it is regrettable that Russia's prioritization of its own interests led to the misuse of the veto power, thereby undermining peace and security in outer space.

The act of vetoing draft resolutions that aim to safeguard this realm is to the detriment of our collective goal of maintaining a peaceful cosmos. Let us reaffirm our shared interest in promoting peace and security in outer space. The ramifications of conflict in that domain extend far beyond the stars; they touch the very fabric of life on Earth. Should the actions of nuclear States jeopardize the stability of outer space, it would hinder our ability to utilize it for essential services such as agriculture or communications, which are vital for sustainable development. Moreover, we must stand firm in upholding the prohibition on placing nuclear weapons in outer space. The development and deployment of such weapons, or any other forms of mass destruction intended for use beyond our atmosphere, are not only irresponsible but also pose an existential threat to humankind. Our commitment to that prohibition is not negotiable. It is a fundamental tenet of our collective security and survival.

In conclusion, let us heed the call to action. Let us transcend our differences and unite in our commitment to preserving the peace and security of outer space. In doing so, we not only safeguard the future of generations to come but also reaffirm the enduring principles upon which the United Nations was founded.

Mr. Yousfi (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Let me begin by congratulating the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting, which concerns an issue that Morocco views as both important and essential, that is the preservation of our world against any use of weapons of mass destruction in outer space.

Humankind is driven by a unique desire to discover new horizons and to venture where no one has gone before. Outer space is only one of the new horizons that humankind has explored and will continue to explore in the future. In that context, Member States have a common and shared responsibility to maintain outer space as a peaceful and secure arena, as is recognized in the treaties in which almost all Member States with an interest in space are involved. Article 1 of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty states that

“The exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind.”

That interest in the peaceful uses of space should always guide our current and future actions in this critical area. Anarchy in such a complex space could spark major conflicts. In that regard, my country is of the view that it is appropriate to continue discussions on the regulation of responsible behaviour of Member States in that area, emphasizing the peaceful settlement of disputes and providing diplomatic deterrence against aggressive or irresponsible behaviour.

Morocco remains firmly committed to the principles of the 1967 Treaty, which guarantees an equitable and balanced use of outer space, without appropriation or militarization, including of the moon and other celestial bodies, and considers that the peaceful use of space is a prerequisite for ensuring the sustainability of responsible space activities. My country also welcomes the key role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space as the main United Nations body promoting international cooperation in the exploration, use and peaceful applications of outer space.

Morocco's space activities have seen significant development following the launches in November 2017 and November 2018 of our two satellites Mohammed VI A and B. That achievement, in addition to strategic development plans, is clear evidence that my country has made space technology a genuine strategic lever

for the socioeconomic and sustainable development of our country. At the regional level, cooperation with African countries is at the heart of our national strategy for the development of space activities, and several agreements have been concluded for capacity-building and technology transfer in that domain in order to better meet the needs of developing countries. In addition, Morocco continues to support the African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education, affiliated with the United Nations and located in Rabat, with a view to helping to strengthen the national capacities of African countries in science and related technologies.

In conclusion, Morocco remains more committed than ever to the peaceful and sustainable use and exploitation of outer space in the interest of all countries. My country will spare no effort to continue its cooperation with the United Nations with a view to ensuring that outer space is used for scientific, technical and socioeconomic purposes.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in this debate. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 63.

Agenda item 63 (*continued*)

Use of the veto

Special report of the Security Council **(A/78/856)**

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will continue its debate on this item, in accordance with resolution 76/262, from its 74th and 75th plenary meetings, on 1 May 2024, concerning the use of the veto by a permanent member of the Security Council at its 9609th meeting, on 18 April, under the agenda item “Admission of new members”.

Ms. Rios (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia thanks the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting on the use of the veto in the Security Council concerning its agenda item “Admission of new members”, in accordance with resolution 76/262.

We align ourselves with the statement made last week by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/78/PV.74).

Given the failure of the Security Council, we are once again faced with a situation that violates fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law and creates an obstacle to international peace and security, affecting the possibility of finding solutions that contribute to peace and justice for the Palestinian people.

The recent decision of the United States to use its veto in the Security Council against the draft resolution presented by Algeria (S/2024/312) requesting the State of Palestine's admission as a full member of the United Nations is an example of insensitivity and a lack of coherence between words and action. My country is deeply disappointed, because that decision runs counter to the purposes of our Organization and its fulfilment of its mandates. The admission of Palestine as a United Nations Member State should be an expression of our countries' commitment to the principles of sovereign equality and mutual respect among nations. However, the action of a single Member State has undermined those principles and perpetuated an unjust status quo, leaving the Palestinian people without the small hope they had of being recognized as a free people exercising their right to self-determination.

Bolivia, which has its own history of constant struggle for justice and equality, will continue to support Palestinians' legitimate right to self-determination and the full exercise of their sovereignty. Today the States Members of the United Nations are more than ever obliged to act reasonably and consistently. We cannot continue to be complicit in the atrocious genocide of civilians in Gaza through inaction. It is time for the international community and the General Assembly to act with decision and determination. Palestine needs international solidarity and cooperation today and we must provide it with certainty right now. We believe firmly that Palestine will be a full State sooner rather than later, within the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting.

The delegation of the Sudan aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the United Arab Emirates, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Uganda, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/78/PV.74).

The Palestinian question has remained stagnant at the United Nations for more than 75 years. The situation has now deteriorated in an unprecedented manner and could have grave consequences for the entire region unless the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions of international legitimacy are implemented. The international community has failed to respond to the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people, and specifically for their right to self-determination, to see an end to the occupation and to obtain full membership of the United Nations. In that context, the Sudan reaffirms its support for Palestine's demand for full membership in the United Nations, and we thank all States that have called for a ceasefire, the delivery of humanitarian assistance and de-escalation in the Gaza Strip.

We thank Algeria in particular for its efforts and for its submission to the Security Council of draft resolution S/2024/312, on the admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations. The Sudan regrets that the Council failed to adopt the draft resolution owing to the use of the veto. Its adoption of a draft resolution on the admission of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations would represent a minimum contribution to supporting sincere diplomatic efforts to find a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question and the best possible support for ensuring the realization of a long-delayed two-State solution. It goes without saying that Palestine exists, through its history, its land and its people, and the resolutions of the United Nations, particularly those of the Security Council and the General Assembly, testify to that.

We all know that security and stability in the Middle East can be achieved only by ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and enabling the Palestinian people to fully enjoy their legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination, to establish an independent State along 4 June 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital, living in peace and security, and to gain membership in the United Nations. The Middle East and its peoples cannot afford further escalation and conflict. The Palestinian people have endured decades of suffering and deprivation. It is time to end that injustice and grant the Palestinian people their legitimate rights, as recognized by international law and the resolutions of the United Nations.

Mr. Gueye (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of

Non-Aligned Countries (see A/78/PV.74), and I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Senegal regrets the use of the veto in the Security Council on its draft resolution S/2024/312, on recommending the admission of the State of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations, despite the overwhelming support it received from a majority of Council members. The veto prevented the State of Palestine from being admitted as a full member of the United Nations, even though it is recognized by 142 of the 193 Member States of our Organization and meets the criteria for a State in terms of population, territory and political power.

The Council's veto is disappointing, because it unjustly denies one of the parties a right that has long been duly recognized for the other. In that context, in which the Palestinian people have repeatedly and through their various Governments demanded to be granted their rights — reaffirmed time and again by international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions — granting that recognition is no longer an end in itself but a crucial step towards a just and lasting solution to the conflict, on an equal footing with the State of Israel and all stakeholders involved.

That is why Senegal, faithful to its commitments on the issue, has continued to unwaveringly support the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to a viable contiguous State, with East Jerusalem as its capital and within secure, internationally recognized borders, alongside the State of Israel. In the meantime, the international community must continue to preserve and protect the Palestinian people's rights, including their right to life — increasingly threatened by the humanitarian tragedy that continues to unfold before our eyes — and their right to their land, illegally occupied and under ongoing annexation, in flagrant violation of international law. In that connection, and in the firm belief that the required majority would be obtained in the General Assembly, if necessary, Senegal once again urges the Security Council to reconsider the admission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations as soon as possible. My delegation also invites the Member States that have not yet done so to recognize the State of Palestine. Senegal warmly welcomes the recent decisions by Barbados and Jamaica in that regard.

In the face of the cruelties of war, often committed by flouting the law, the international community has a responsibility to stand on the right side of history

whenever necessary, in accordance with the values on which our Organization was founded. When it comes to this question, the right side remains and will always be the one that allows the State of Palestine to occupy its rightful place as a full member of our Organization.

Ms. Baños Müller (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing El Salvador's full support for Palestine's application for admission as a full Member of the United Nations. El Salvador recognizes that the State of Palestine meets all the requirements set forth in Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations and supports its application for admission to our Organization, which it has pursued with full respect for the various relevant international legal instruments. We reiterate that international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions have confirmed that the Palestinian people have a right to self-determination and sovereignty over their territory.

More than a decade ago, my country recognized Palestine and established diplomatic relations with it as a free, sovereign and independent State, in the firm belief that it would contribute to a peaceful, just and sustainable solution to the complex situation in the Middle East. El Salvador's principled position was also reflected in its vote in favour of resolution 67/19, which granted Palestine the status of a non-member observer State in the United Nations. We feel compelled to remind Members that in that resolution, guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly also expressed its hope that the Security Council would give favourable consideration to Palestine's application for full membership.

We emphasize that the Security Council has a moral and historical duty to recognize the State of Palestine as part of a comprehensive solution for peace and security in the Middle East, including a settlement of the current situation in the Gaza Strip. The State of Palestine has demonstrated its commitment to abiding by the rules of our Organization as an observer State, which is why we believe that it is time for a new chapter in which we guarantee it equal rights and conditions in this arena. We believe that the admission of Palestine as a full Member of our Organization is conducive to and strengthens the prospects for a two-State solution, the only internationally recognized solution with the potential to bring lasting peace to the Middle East. We acknowledge the strong support shown for Palestine's application in the Security Council and regret that the exercise of the veto once again undermined the manifest

will of most of the States that make up the Council today. We regret that despite being seized of the issue for more than seven decades, acting on behalf of the entire membership of the United Nations and holding hundreds of formal meetings on this issue, the Council has not been able to provide a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

Today the State of Palestine is recognized by more than 140 States. Many others have expressed their willingness to take that important step in the belief that it is time for a definitive political solution to this long-standing conflict. It is time for the Security Council to act in accordance with the will of the majority of the States that make up the United Nations. We therefore call on the Council to act in accordance with its recognition of the need for the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and make a two-State solution a reality. We recognize the importance of resolution 76/262 and Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations in a context where members of the Security Council are unable to meet their fundamental obligation to maintain international peace and security. We believe that there should be strict compliance with General Assembly resolutions, which represent the will of the majority of the Member States of the Organization — in this case, resolutions ES-11/21 and ES-11/22

El Salvador once again requests that we honour and respect all Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the situation in the Middle East. That includes the mandates of Council resolution 2728 (2024), calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. We are deeply concerned that, since the resolution's

adoption in the Security Council, the ceasefire has still not come about and the humanitarian disaster is getting worse day by day. We deplore the serious violations of international humanitarian law that can be seen in all of the attacks and acts of violence and hostilities against the civilian population.

We once again call for the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance, in quantities sufficient to alleviate the desperate conditions in which the civilian population in Gaza is living. We also call for the immediate and unconditional release of all of the hostages. We also ask that all parties act with moderation so as to avoid a new escalation in the region. And we once again call upon all of those with influence on the parties to work towards peace. In particular, we note the importance of the full compliance of States with international obligations regarding the transfer of weapons in situations of conflict, in order to avoid non-compliance with, and violation of, relevant international instruments, such as the Geneva Conventions of 1949, on international humanitarian law.

Finally, we hope for the re-establishment of a political horizon to bring about a negotiated solution to the conflict. In that regard, we reaffirm that the State of Palestine should be admitted as a full member of the United Nations, and that is now more urgent than ever.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 63.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.