



General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

98th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 10 July 2024, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President: I invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft resolution A/78/L.88, circulated under sub-item (i) of agenda item 18, entitled “Combating sand and dust storms”.

Members will recall that at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 11 September 2023, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (i) of agenda item 18 to the Second Committee. To enable the Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (i) of agenda item 18 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided (decision 78/504 B).

Agenda item 18 (continued)

Sustainable development

(i) Combating sand and dust storms

Draft resolution (A/78/L.88)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.88 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Kwoba (Uganda): On behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China, I have the honour to introduce draft

resolution A/78/L.88, entitled “United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms (2025–2034)”, under agenda item 18, sub-item (i).

The draft resolution recognizes that sand and dust storms are an issue of international concern, the costs of which are measured in economic, social and environmental terms. Sand and dust storms are an increasing threat to the achievement of 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their means of implementation. The draft resolution proclaims the period from 2025 to 2034 as the United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, with the aim of enhancing international and regional cooperation and supporting and scaling up efforts to prevent, halt and mitigate the negative effects of sand and dust storms, especially on the affected countries.

The Group would like to thank all delegations for their constructive engagement and flexibility during the negotiations of the draft resolution. We also thank Mr. Javad Momeni of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who coordinated and facilitated the informal consultations on the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Finally, the Group looks forward to the consensus adoption of the important draft resolution. We therefore invite other delegations that have not yet co-sponsored the draft resolution to do so before its adoption.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.88.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

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Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/78/L.88 and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/78/L.88: Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.88, entitled “United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms (2025–2034)”.

May I take it that Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.88?

Draft resolution A/78/L.88 was adopted (resolution 78/314).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (i) of agenda item 18?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 20 (continued)

Groups of countries in special situations

(b) Follow-up to the second United Nations

Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries

Draft resolution (A/78/L.87)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.87.

Mr. Kwoba (Uganda): On behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.87, entitled “Further modalities of the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries”.

The draft resolution sets 10 to 13 December 2024 as the dates for holding the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in Gaborone. The Group would like to express its appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Botswana for offering to host the third United Nations Conference on LLDCs. We commend the Bureau members of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference, led by the co-Chairs — the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Mongolia — for their valued contribution to the preparations for the Conference, including the approval of an outcome document to be adopted at

the Conference. The G-77 and China encourage the participation of all delegations at the Conference at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government.

Finally, the Group looks forward to the consensus adoption of this important draft resolution. We therefore invite other delegations that have not yet co-sponsored the draft resolution to do so before its adoption.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.87.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/78/L.87 and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/78/L.87: Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.87, entitled “Further modalities of the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries”.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.87?

Draft resolution A/78/L.87 was adopted (resolution 78/315).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

Agenda item 122 (continued)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft decision (A/78/L.77)

Draft amendment (A/78/L.81)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft amendment A/78/L.81.

Mr. Chumakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to submit an amendment to draft decision A/78/L.77, on the list of speakers.

First and foremost, we would like to thank you, Mr. President, for introducing this decision. In our view, its provisions do not raise any questions, and they strike very important balance. We do have issue with just one provision. We cannot quite understand why the European Union (EU), as an observer, is being granted greater privileges than other observers, including Palestine. We recognize that the EU's status as an observer was established by resolution 65/276, adopted in 2011. Sub-paragraph (a) of paragraph 1 states that the EU can make interventions as a group, whereas sub-paragraph (b) of the same paragraph states that the EU can participate in the general debate, after Member States.

We take as our starting point that the Summit of the Future is an event that should be put on an equal footing with a general debate. We also take the starting point that the EU should not be granted greater privileges than other observers at this particular event. That is in keeping with General Assembly decisions, including resolution 65/276, on the status of the European Union. We therefore introduce draft amendment A/78/L.81 and call on Member States to support it.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/78/L.77 and draft amendment A/78/L.81.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that there have been no additional sponsors since the submission of draft amendment A/78/L.81.

The President: Delegations wishing to make a statement in explanation of vote before the voting on any proposal under this item are invited to do so now in one intervention. After action on all of them, there will be an opportunity for explanations of vote after the voting on any or all of them. Before giving the floor for explanations of vote before the voting, may I remind allegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Horváth (Hungary): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

For more than a decade, the European Union has been participating in United Nations high-level meetings, conferences and summits based on its observer status,

as mandated by resolution 65/276, agreed by this very Assembly back in 2011.

Draft decision A/78/L.77, proposed by the President of the General Assembly, which Russian amendment A/78/L.81 questions today, is fully in line with the EU observer status resolution and long-standing United Nations practice. It simply allows the EU, like other participants, to draw a speaking slot and to speak during the Summit of the Future, including on behalf of its Member States, if that is so agreed. It fully complies with long-standing practice and does not grant the EU any additional rights or privileges. Russia's amendment, by contrast, directly contradicts the EU's observer status resolution and the long-established United Nations practices. It denies the EU the right to participate and speak. The draft amendment, in a hostile way, singles out only the EU and will significantly impact its ability to contribute to the Summit of the Future, at which vital discussions on peace and security, financing for development and reform of the international financial architecture will be held. Those are issues in which the EU has a leading global role and has engaged constructively, both on the ground and in negotiations with countless partners in this Hall.

Russia presents unfounded legal arguments to justify a politically motivated draft amendment on the EU's participation in the Summit of the Future. It argues that the arrangements set out in subparagraph 1(b) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 65/276, which governs the EU's participation in the general debate during the high-level week, should also apply to the Summit. However, those arrangements are specific to the general debate alone and were explicitly designed not to be extended to other high-level meetings, for which it is subparagraph 1 (a) that explicitly applies. For example, unlike the general debate format, the speaking arrangements for the Summit of the Future are tailored to the Summit of the Future event alone, involving the drawing of speaking slots.

Russia also claims that the draft decision proposed by the President of the General Assembly will somehow enable the EU to speak before all other observers, even before Member States. Nothing could be further from the truth. The EU's speaking order, like that of any other participant, including observers, will depend entirely on the outcome of the drawing process and the drawn speaking slots. Russia's draft amendment tries to strip the EU — and the EU only — from that process, which applies to everyone else, including other observers.

While Russia's draft amendment may look technical in nature, it has far-reaching consequences. It prevents the EU from meaningfully participating in and contributing to the Summit and denies the rights that the EU has been granted by resolution 65/276. The European Union is seeking fair and non-discriminatory treatment. We do not seek or receive any preferential treatment or additional rights. We urge all delegations to vote against Russia's hostile draft amendment A/78/L.81 and to support draft decision A/78/L.77 proposed by the President of the General Assembly, which is inclusive, fair and legally sound.

Mr. Chumakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We listened very carefully to the statement by the representative of Hungary. We understand the logic behind his statement. The only thing that we do not understand is why we are being accused of depriving the European Union (EU) of its participation or discriminating against the EU. That is categorically false. We do not object to the participation of the European Union and we understand that we also have to listen to its views about various global processes — but we are listening to the EU alongside other observers.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

Before we proceed to take a decision on draft decision A/78/L.77, in accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the General Assembly will first take a decision on draft amendment A/78/L.81.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft amendment A/78/L.81.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Belarus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mali, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Estonia,

Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu

Abstaining:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahrain, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, Chile, China, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Draft amendment A/78/L.81 was rejected by 74 to 6, with 55 abstentions.

The President: Since draft amendment A/78/L.81 was not adopted, we shall proceed to take action on draft decision A/78/L.77.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft decision A/78/L.77, entitled "Establishment of the list of speakers for the Summit of the Future".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/78/L.77?

Draft decision A/78/L.77 was adopted (decision 78/555).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 122.

The meeting rose at 10:40 a.m.