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Official Records

President: Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 11

Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal

Draft resolution (A/68/L.8)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.8.

Mr. Chernyshenko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As the President of the Organizing Committee for the XXII Olympic Winter Games and the XI Paralympic Winter Games to be held in Sochi, Russia, in 2014 — the first time the Games have been held in my country — I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly a draft resolution entitled “Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal” (A/68/L.8).

The draft resolution is inspired mainly by the 2,000-year-old ancient Greek tradition of calling for a truce during the Olympic Games in order to ensure the safe passage of athletes to and from the site of the Games. Together with an appeal for a truce during the forthcoming Olympic Games in Sochi, the draft resolution also calls upon the States Members of the United Nations to cooperate with the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee in their efforts to use sport as a tool for reconciliation. The draft resolution welcomes the

United Nations initiative to designate 6 April as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. The Olympic Games in Sochi are to become a symbol of constructive dialogue among peoples. The draft resolution pays a particular attention to the Sochi 2014 cultural and educational programmes as well as peacebuilding.

Since the announcement of Russia as host of the Games, a historic event, we have set ourselves the ambitious goal of conducting innovative Games that will express the character of a new, modern Russia and promote sustainable positive changes. Our vision of the Olympic Games in Sochi has relied on the consolidation of the entire nation united by the Olympic dream, the legendary athletic traditions of Russia, and the overall support we have for the Olympic values of friendship, respect and aspiration to perfection. It is precisely that vision that has been driving our decisions, efforts and expectations on the long road to the Olympic Games.

We can see already now how our goals are becoming a reality. The Games in Sochi have exerted a significant influence on our country by giving an impetus, in particular, to the development in Russia of such socially important phenomena as the volunteer movement, the creation of an environment accessible to all, and the practical implementation of the principles of sustainable development in accordance with green standards.

In recent years, Sochi has become a venue for major forums dedicated to the strengthening of peace. The Generations for Peace International Camp has

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been held in Sochi since 2010. The participants in the Generations for Peace International Camp will meet again during the Paralympic Games in Sochi in 2014. In 2012, the capital of the future Olympic Games hosted a prestigious Forum on Sport for Peace. Representatives of 90 countries participated in its work. The Cultural Olympiad Sochi 2014, which was launched in 2010, has united our country from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok. For four years, tens of thousands of events have been held across Russia for millions of spectators. The Cultural Olympiad is successfully fulfilling its mission of preserving and promoting the cultural wealth of Russia and demonstrating the best examples of that wealth to our compatriots and the guests of our country. The best that our culture has to offer will be on display to visitors at the Games and to the entire world community during the finals of the Cultural Olympiad in Sochi.

An extensive Olympic educational programme, known as Sochi 2014, is being rolled out. Annually, Olympic classes have been attended by over 5 million Russian high-school students, and thematic shifts dedicated to the Olympic Truce have been organized in summer camps. The establishment of the world's first Russian International Olympic University, offering education for representatives of all 205 National Olympic Committees, is the pinnacle of the Sochi 2014 educational programme. The University was inaugurated by Mr. Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation. Recently, the President of International Olympic Committee, Mr. Thomas Bach, met with the students of the University. The first enrolment in the University included students from 15 countries, and there will be a unique opportunity to put all of their learning into practice during the Sochi Games.

We have emphasized in the draft resolution the importance of the volunteer movement, both in the framework of the Games and on a global scale. The Sochi Games have become a powerful catalyst for the emergence of the volunteer movement in Russia. Based on the volunteer centres located in all federal districts of the country, hundreds of thousands of Sochi 2014 volunteers are conducting their daily work in the regions, helping vulnerable groups within the population and addressing essential social and environmental issues. Sochi 2014 volunteer centres throughout Russia have already implemented over 3,000 volunteer projects of their own in addition to preparing for the Games.

As a main consequence of the Sochi 2014 volunteer programme, Russia has received a rating of 8, starting practically from zero, in the World Giving Index 2012, for the involvement of its population in volunteer activity. Let me note that, for the first time in the history of the Olympic Games, the Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee has engaged volunteer students in the drafting of an Olympic Truce resolution. Students of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations — future diplomats and policymakers — have formulated proposals for the initial draft.

The draft resolution focuses on the need to ensure and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. Thanks to the Sochi Games, we have managed to make the standards of access to buildings and infrastructure an indispensable and compulsory requirement for all regions of Russia. The all-Russia project of an accessibility map makes it possible for persons with disabilities to find accessible facilities in their hometowns, allowing them to become more actively involved in social life.

The 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics torch relay has helped to bring together all of the more than 200 nationalities living in Russia. The relay started on 7 October in the capital of our homeland, Moscow, and will be the longest national torch relay in the history of the Winter Olympics in terms of both duration — 123 days — and distance covered — over 65,000 kilometres. The torch has already visited the North Pole as part of the international research expedition and became a symbol of joint exploration of the Arctic by all eight Arctic Powers. And today, at 11.14 p.m. New York time, the Olympic torch will be launched into space in the international space station and for the first time carried in a spacewalk. This event is one more step into the future, and the appearance of the Olympic torch in space will be a symbol of the limitlessness of human possibility and of the striving of athletes from every country to reach ever new heights in sport.

Russia commends the fruitful cooperation among States Members of the United Nations and their contributions to the drafting of the text of this year's draft resolution. We are grateful to the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee and the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace for their constant support. We are also grateful to the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace for their valuable help.

There are 93 days left until the opening ceremony of the Sochi Olympic Games, and 121 until that of the Paralympic Games. The Olympic villages, housing athletes from 85 countries, will be open even sooner, and within them will rise the walls of the Olympic Truce, where the athletes can leave their wishes. The blue flags of the United Nations will be unfurled above the Olympic stadium and villages. We are eagerly looking forward to hosting the whole world as our guests and will do everything we can to ensure that the Sochi Olympics are remembered first of all as a contest among the greatest athletes of the world in an atmosphere of hospitality, intercultural exchange and mutual respect.

On behalf of the Russian Federation, the city of Sochi, the Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee and all our partners, I would like to thank the General Assembly for its attention and to ask that it support our draft resolution.

Ms. Singh (India): I feel honoured and privileged to participate in today's debate on agenda item 11, entitled "Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

India welcomes resolution 67/296, adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session and proclaiming 6 April as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. We hope that its observance will help spread awareness about the importance of sport as a tool for development and peace. We are also happy to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/68/L.8, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", to be adopted by the Assembly today.

We also welcome the deliberations in the third International Forum on Sport for Peace and Development, organized jointly in June at United Nations Headquarters in New York by the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). We are confident that the collaboration between the United Nations and the IOC will lead to the integration of sport into all areas of development and peace and help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Since the dawn of human civilization, the intrinsic links between sports, games and the human pursuit of excellence have been recognized. That pursuit of excellence through sport reached its epitome in the

civilization of ancient Greece, the progenitor of the modern Olympic movement.

In India, sports and physical activities have also been an integral part of our civilization, through the practice of yoga and its highly evolved system of physical, mental and spiritual regimens. Yoga, as a form of physical and mental exercise, is now popular across the world. In addition, India also has a range of highly developed indigenous games and martial arts. After India attained independence in 1947, the integration of physical education and sports into formal education was emphasized in our first five-year plan. A separate Department of Sports was subsequently set up in 1982, and a national sports policy was announced in 1984, a year that also saw the establishment of the Sports Authority of India, aimed at ensuring the effective and optimum utilization of various sports facilities, and overseeing all matters pertaining to sports promotion and management. India has encouraged the autonomous functioning of national sports federations, and we are proud to say that the Board of Control of Cricket in India is one of the most resourceful autonomous sports bodies in the world. All sectors of our society, including the media and the corporate sector, are actively involved in promoting sports.

Sport is a highly effective tools in achieving development objectives in the areas of health, education and child development. It helps generate public awareness and inspires broad and inclusive action in support of the development agenda. It is heartening to note that sport has been recognized as one of the tools to address development challenges. We appreciate the work of the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace, and of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace in bringing the worlds of sport and development closer together. Efforts should continue to focus on sport for development, and to root it in the United Nations system.

Associating sports personalities with the United Nations in order to create public awareness of education, health and development issues, and promoting tolerance, understanding and peace within and between communities and cultures, is a praiseworthy endeavour. I would like to mention here that Indian athletes have also been associated with different United Nations entities — the Indian tennis star Vijay Amritraj has been a United Nations Messenger of Peace, and our cricketing

hero Sachin Tendulkar is a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Environment Programme.

India welcomes the work of the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympics Committee in promoting and strengthening a culture of peace based on the spirit of the Olympic Truce. I assure them of India's full cooperation and support in their efforts to use sport as a tool to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation. India also cherishes and celebrates the noble ideals and values of the Olympic movement, and stands committed to furthering international fraternity, friendship, goodwill and unity. We believe that there is no better medium than sport to inculcate and foster the values of respect, diversity and tolerance across communities, civilizations and cultures.

Mr. Wijaya (Indonesia): Organized sport enjoys an honoured tradition, as it has promoted peaceful international interaction among diverse peoples and nations competing without strife and despite geopolitical differences. In that context, we welcome the adoption of the biannual draft resolution (A/68/L.8) being considered under the current agenda item, which showcases, *inter alia*, the recognition by Member States of the unique potential of sport to promote peace and development and the valuable contribution of sport in creating an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding among peoples and nations.

As we are now entering the final push towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) before the 2015 deadline, sport can play an important role that generates broad, inclusive and committed action in support of the MDGs and make a meaningful difference in the life of people.

In Indonesia, we have a Ministry of Youth and Sports which is a Government institution dedicated to developing and integrating sport into our national development strategy. The commemoration every 9 September of the National Day of Sports and the implementation of the law on the national sport system, Law No. 3 of 2005, mark our deep commitment to nurturing the culture of sport within our society. The law on the national sport system provides a legal basis for, *inter alia*, raising awareness of the relevance of sport to character-building in our nation and galvanizing efforts to cultivate in young generations the strong traits of discipline, perseverance, competitiveness, sportsmanship, friendship and unity. The traditions of the Olympic Truce and the Olympic ideal need to be

preserved and promoted as they can be powerful tools to help educate and send messages of peace, non-violence, fairness and tolerance to current and future generations.

We all share the aspiration to live harmoniously in peace and prosperity. Sport is an exemplary way to transmit our shared values through friendly, peaceful interactions. It gives us a means to demonstrate the shared humanity in all of us and has a unique and strategic role to play in energizing the public by encouraging actions at the local, regional and international level in support of the development agenda. With its power to attract, inspire and mobilize people, sport can be an effective tool for conveying crucial messages on matters related to education, conflict prevention, post-disaster relief and normalization of life, economic development, as well as on issues related to the environment.

Meanwhile, at the international level, Indonesia is honoured to take part in the Group of Friends of Sport for Peace and Development initiative and to co-sponsor today's draft resolution with a view to fostering the culture of sport as an integral part of our life.

Finally, as highlighted by the draft resolution, Indonesia wishes to underscore the importance of partnerships among related stakeholders, undertaking concrete actions at the local, national, regional and international levels, and promoting and strengthening a culture of peace based on the spirit of sport and the Olympic Truce. In that regard, Indonesia reiterates its ongoing support for advancing cooperation through sport for peace and development.

Ms. Picco (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): On 6 February 2014, the United Nations flag will again fly at the Olympic site, side by side with the five rings and the Russian flag, when the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games open in Sochi.

Our consideration of agenda item 11, "Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", has special and symbolic significance this year because it allows Monaco to celebrate a moving anniversary. Twenty years ago, on 25 October 1993, the General Assembly adopted for the first time a resolution entitled "Observance of the Olympic Truce" (resolution 48/11) following an initiative of the Organization of African Unity presented by Egypt. That was the first draft resolution that the Principality of Monaco, which had become the 183rd Member State of the Organization a few months earlier, had co-authored.

Since then, and during the then-presidency of Juan Antonio Samaranch, the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) were able to forge an increasingly fruitful partnership. That strong link was affirmed when the IOC was granted observer status in the General Assembly in 2009, under the presidency of Mr. Jacques Rogge, whom I wish to commend once again for his dynamic accomplishments oriented towards the inclusion of sport for development and peace. I am also absolutely certain that Mr. Thomas Bach's vast knowledge of the Committee will allow it to push the shared action of our two organizations even further. I can therefore strongly reaffirm the full support of my delegation for the work of the Committee, in full compliance with the unwavering commitment to the Olympic ideal of His Serene Highness Prince Albert II, IOC member and five-time Olympian.

As resolution 67/296, declaring the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, recently reaffirmed, the mission and role of the International Olympic Committee — which are to place sport in the service of humankind, promote a peaceful society and a healthy lifestyle, align sport with culture and education, and preserve human dignity — have always been held in our highest esteem. In that context, it is therefore natural that the International Olympic Truce Centre in Athens should be a key player in promoting the ideals of peace, tolerance, understanding and mutual respect, under the banner of the Olympic truce.

The Olympic Games always arouse strong feelings and great joy, despite ongoing conflicts. The noble mission of the Olympic Truce during the Games reminds us of our lofty commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Olympic Charter. On another level, like any sports event intended both for professionals and amateurs and young people, the Games also promote values intrinsic to the exercise of outdoing oneself, respecting others and bringing cultures closer together.

That focus inspires the work of the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Wilfried Lemke. Here, I welcome the initiative of the youth leadership camps, the seventh of which took place from 23 August to 2 September in Gwangju, Republic of Korea, bringing together young people from all regions of the world to share, in the context of sport, a unique experience of learning from and understanding others.

Allow me also to mention the importance of the Universiades, organized by the International University Sports Federation, which, like the Olympic Games, take place every two years in summer and winter, the latest of which was held in Kazan in July. Some 10,000 university athletes thus carried the flags of the 162 participating countries.

The many partnerships among the United Nations, the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace, the International Olympic Committee and the organizers of the Olympic host countries are promising. They encourage us to seek all possible contributions to the great scheme that inspires us, namely, to achieve a peaceful and better world.

The peoples of the world have never been so able to travel, meet, engage and fraternize. The arrival of the Olympic torch in the host country is always a moving moment. Following its arrival in Moscow on 6 October, it has now embarked on one of the longest odysseys of its history before being set alight in Sochi on 7 February next year. It will have travelled no less than 65,000 kilometres in 123 days from Olympia to Moscow, from Kaliningrad to Anadyr, from Vladivostok to Lake Baikal and the Black Sea, and even to space, as we heard this morning.

But travelling through such a vast area must be more than a mere statistic. That unique unifying momentum has been fully embraced by the host country, as reflected in the unparalleled number of 14,000 relay runners who will have participated in the torch's journey.

For all participants, spectators and fans, the Olympic Games are not confined to competition or to seeking a record. Each Olympian takes part in a huge common human adventure with thousands of other athletes of all outlooks and cultures. Sport is above all a human voyage within oneself, on the one hand, to surpass one's own limits and towards others, on the other hand, as the main aim is not necessarily to win but to share in respecting others.

I congratulate the delegation of the Russian Federation on the draft resolution and join millions of spectators who are keenly awaiting the opening of the winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in the hope that, in line with the Greek tradition for thousands of years now, weapons will fall silent.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation for the

activities of the United Nations in the area of sport and the work of the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace. I would also like to commend the efforts of Mr. Wilfried Lemke, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, and to convey to him our support for peace and development throughout the world by means of sport. I also thank Mr. Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee. I am convinced that he will strengthen the United Nations partnership with sport.

Sport shows how peace can be strengthened because it has no geographical or social boundaries. Sport is a way to strengthen social and economic integration at all levels. It is also a way to develop friendship through non-violence, tolerance and justice. Through sport, we can resolve problems that arise from crises since it is a way of bringing people together.

In view of the importance of sport, the United Nations believes that it can improve and promote solidarity among peoples. Given the importance of sport and physical activity, the connection between sport and human rights is evident. It helps us to meet the Millennium Development Goals, as mentioned by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace.

Sport can also be a way to promote peace and security. In that connection, I would like to thank the representative of the Russian Federation for strengthening solidarity through sport and the efforts in that regard. I express my appreciation for the importance that Member States give to sport and its place in national policymaking and international policies. It is a way to strengthen the bases for education and health.

Allow me also to thank and reiterate my congratulations to the Government of the United Kingdom on its successful thirtieth Olympic Games and fourteenth Paralympics. That helps to strengthen the culture of peace and harmony in the spirit of the Olympic Truce. It can also act as a catalyst for friendship and the spirit of sportsmanship among athletes whatever their religion or belief.

I would also like to thank all Member States for the Truce and for declaring 6 April International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. Allow me also to express my support to Brazil for hosting the World Cup and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2016. I

would also like to congratulate Japan, which will host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020.

As I said earlier, in order to foster that momentum and to make sport a means for promoting the universal principle of international solidarity, I congratulate the Russian Federation on the draft resolution that it introduced, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/68/L.8). The draft resolution affirms respect for the Olympic Truce and the ideals of the United Nations and the Olympic Movement, namely, friendship among peoples, harmony, non-violence and non-discrimination. I hope that all Member States will support the draft resolution, thereby sending a strong message to all those that work for the noble practice of sport and greatly encouraging every athlete.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the presentation given on behalf of the Organizing Committee of the Sochi Winter Olympics, which we know will be a great success.

Sport is an important activity for human development and cooperation at the national and international levels. Cuba believes that sport is a practice that strengthens solidarity and friendship among peoples as essential components of the promotion of peace, development and cooperation among nations.

Following the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, sport was no longer an exclusive pursuit in our country and became a right enjoyed by all. In order to guarantee that right, we have promoted a pedagogical system that incorporates physical education as an integral component of education at all stages, which has led to significant successes in regional and international competitions. At the London 2012 Olympic Games, Cuba, though only a small developing country, took sixteenth place in the medals table. Cuba also ranked fifteenth in the Paralympic Games this year, achieving its best-ever performance with nine gold medals.

In Cuba, we work to provide sports training from an early age, which allows us to promote talented individuals who go on to become distinguished athletes. At the same time, we reject the notion that money is the only reward of athletic activity, and we therefore denounce the theft of talented athletes from developing countries.

For years, the Cuban sports movement, headed by the Cuban Olympic Committee and the National

Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation, has pursued collaboration with several developing countries. Through bilateral agreements, Cuban technicians, teachers and coaches share their sports training methods with many developing countries, thereby helping to attain even better sporting results and raise even further the popularity of sport. This contributes ultimately to strengthening the bonds of friendship among peoples.

Cuba has also made its Institute of Sports Medicine and anti-doping laboratory available to the countries of the South in order to contribute to the fight against the scourge of drugs and cheating that, in exceptional cases, corrupts athletes and impedes fair play. The International School of Physical Education and Sport in Havana trains professionals whose core values are solidarity and respect for human dignity.

Cuba congratulates the city of Sochi in the Russian Federation on hosting the XXII Olympic Winter Games in February 2014 and commends the work carried out so far. We wish the Games all the success they deserve. Moreover, we trust that the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, will be a success for all of the peoples of the South, and for those of Latin America and the Caribbean in particular.

The choice of Sochi and Rio de Janeiro to host the Olympic Games is also due recognition of the efforts devoted and results achieved by the peoples and Governments of both countries in terms of economic and social development for the benefit of their citizens and others who live on their territories. They can count on our respect and support in their mission to ensure the success of these celebrations of sport and friendship.

We emphasize the need to further develop international cooperation and solidarity through the Olympic ideal. Cuba urges greater investment in education, health, culture and sport projects by drawing on the billions of dollars currently spent on weapons. A great deal could be done for the right to development of millions of people around the world with the resources available. All that is needed is political will.

Finally, Cuba reiterates its decision to continue sharing its greatest sporting asset — the human capital created by the revolution. A genuine commitment to the Olympic ideal, our efforts to realize international law and solidarity, and the ongoing struggle for social justice continue to guide the efforts of the Cuban

people. Sport will continue to be a major component of our efforts for the betterment of humankind.

Mr. Spinellis (Greece): Dating back to the eighth century B.C., the ancient Olympic Games were meant to be a force for peace and solidarity among ancient Greek city-States, which declared a truce for a period of seven days before the beginning and seven days after the end of the Games. Before every Olympiad, heralds in the city of Elis announced the truce, which was implemented as a cessation of hostilities, a prohibition of entry into the city of military forces, a pause of any legal dispute and the suspension of the imposition of death penalties. The ultimate goal was the peaceful conduct of the Games by protecting the city from invasion and ordering individuals and State authorities to refrain from interfering with the safe passage of the athletes. As Thucydides claims, if States violated the truce, their athletes were banned from participating.

The concept of the Olympic Truce once born was carried out for a period of 1,200 years. Greeks saw in the Games a chance to replace conflict with friendly competition. This aspect of Olympism was of great importance to Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who revived the Olympic Games as a firm believer in their potential to advance international understanding and promote world peace. His initiative paved the way for the embodiment of the ideal of the Olympic Truce to the modern Olympic Games.

In today's world, emphasis on Olympic peace has become a major feature of modern Olympic ideology. The foundation of the International Olympic Truce Centre, for the creation of which Greece actively toiled alongside the International Olympic Committee, gave new dynamism to the pursuit of peace. Most importantly, the inclusion of the Olympic Truce in the United Nations framework for the first time through resolution 48/11, in 1993, granted a distinct role to the ideal, given that the United Nations and the Olympic movement share common values and goals. We should bear in mind that in a world of differences, inequalities and conflicts, even an agreement for a temporary truce is an achievement for the international community. It is therefore our responsibility to continue to herald the Olympic Truce and spare no effort to ensure its actual implementation.

In the context of the United Nations and its role as a forum for world peace, this year's draft resolution, entitled "Sport for peace and development: building

a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal” (A/68/L.8), specifies the request to States to observe the Olympic Truce from seven days before until seven days after the Games, mirroring the period of the ancient truce. The draft resolution’s goal is to reiterate the value of sports, culture, education and sustainable development towards a peaceful planet. It further elaborates on the role of sports in promoting social inclusion without discrimination of any kind, tolerance and understanding, aiming at raising awareness around their potential for peace. In the same vein, the draft resolution welcomes the establishment of the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, the sole goal of which has been set as mobilizing for action towards peace.

Ms. Picco (Monaco) Vice-President, took the Chair.

In 2014, the Russian Federation will host the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi. I seize this opportunity to wish Russia every success in that difficult endeavour. The task of the rest of us is to meet our responsibilities by observing the Olympic Truce and making peace a feasible goal. We should all find inspiration in next year’s Olympic Games and reflect on how sports can be used as a propitious tool to reduce tensions and to build bridges.

Finally, with a sense of collectivity, we should make a difference and, for the first time — even for a brief period of time — we should lay down our arms and make the Olympic Truce a reality.

Ms. Al-Mulla (Kuwait) (spoke in Arabic): It is a pleasure for my delegation to take part in this meeting and to deliver a statement on agenda item 11, “Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, based on the State of Kuwait’s belief in the importance of sports and the great service it provides to the international community and to improving relations between nations.

The State of Kuwait affirms the importance of the General Assembly’s deliberations on sport for peace and development. It expresses its appreciation for the work of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Wilfried Lemke, and it pledges to do its utmost to promote the United Nations endeavours in that field. We were honoured to join in the consensus adoption of resolution 66/5, entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, in 2011. We congratulate Russia on submitting draft resolution A/68/L.8.

Sport provides a great opportunity for peace and friendly relations to prevail, and constitutes an important driving force at the national and international levels. It spreads the spirit of peace and teamwork, and it mitigates the threat of wars and animosity. Sport plays a prominent role in improving the lives of peoples worldwide. It builds bridges between individuals and societies and provides a fertile ground for peaceful cordiality. Sport is considered to be a powerful tool in fostering social links between countries and promoting peace, solidarity and justice. It also plays a prominent role in enhancing social integration, economic development and sustainable development in all fields, and plays an important role in enhancing the Millennium Development Goals.

Young people are the cornerstone of social development. We must therefore exploit their potential through policies, programmes and plans that will inevitably lead to a prosperous future for nations. The State of Kuwait attaches great importance to the role of youth through its Ministry of Youth Affairs and its Public Authority for Youth and Sport, which play an important role in training and guiding young people, improving their sports achievements and administering their participation in various tournaments, especially the Olympic Games.

In addition, we cannot forget the role of women in the fields of sport, culture and society. My country has worked eagerly to remove all barriers hindering women’s participation in sport games. My country organized the first Gulf Cooperation Council women’s handball tournament in October, in which five Gulf countries participated. We also participated in the XXX Olympic Games in London in 2011, in which 11 Kuwaiti men and women participated.

Sport has become an integral part of the United Nations objectives and an effective tool to foster the principles of peace and justice, solidarity and cultural and humanitarian diversity among peoples. I reaffirm my country’s support for making sports a priority at the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the interest accorded by all Member States to the universal nature of sport as an important tool in fostering peace, development, education and health.

Mr. Lee (Singapore): Singapore looks forward to the adoption today of draft resolution A/68/L.8, entitled “Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”. We are pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution and welcome the ideals that the Olympic Truce represents.

I take this opportunity to thank the former President of the International Olympic Committee, Mr. Jacques Rogge, for his invaluable contributions to the Olympic movement during his 12-year tenure. I also offer our warmest congratulations to the new President of the International Olympic Committee, Mr. Thomas Bach, and am confident that the Olympic ideals will continue to flourish under his stewardship.

Sport brings many benefits to individuals and communities. It encourages healthy lifestyles and inculcates the values of humility, hard work, discipline, fair play and determination. The timeless Olympic values of striving for excellence, demonstrating respect and celebrating friendship have inspired our top sportsmen and sportswomen to do their best and to overcome their personal limitations through peaceful rivalry. More importantly, sport has a profound way of bringing people together in the pursuit of sporting excellence, transcending differences in socioeconomic backgrounds, cultures and nationalities. And the Olympic Games, standing at the pinnacle of sporting achievement, have contributed immeasurably to the promotion of peace and greater tolerance and understanding in the world.

Singapore is honoured to be part of Olympic history through our hosting of the inaugural Youth Olympic Games in 2010. The Games have been a source of inspiration for us to continue to do everything we can to develop and build a strong sporting culture in Singapore. Our Vision 2030 master plan is a national strategy to stimulate positive, deeply embedded values for Singaporeans and our nation through sport. We believe that sport can help maintain Singapore’s social integrity and economic strength. It can help us overcome the challenges presented by an ageing population, rising regional and international competition, and increased diversity within our multicultural and multiracial society.

Sport is more than winning medals or keeping fit. By its very nature, sport develops the attributes that we need to compete in the evolving global conditions: a winning spirit, a respect for teamwork, a commitment to leadership and a love of country. Those are principles

that we want firmly rooted not just in our athletes, but throughout our society, in our schools and universities, as well as in our workforce. We believe we can live better through sports.

Singapore will continue to champion the Olympic ideals through sports. We competed in the 2012 Summer Olympic Games and the Summer Paralympic Games with our largest ever Olympic contingent — 23 athletes and 8 parathletes, respectively. In 2015, Singapore will host the twenty-eighth Southeast Asian Games, which will also coincide with our fiftieth anniversary as a nation and is therefore doubly significant and historic. Our athletes and parathletes, champions in their own right, will continue to blaze the trail and inspire many young people to dream bigger.

The 65,000-kilometre Sochi Winter Olympic torch relay has already begun, with the torch recently reaching the North Pole. Singapore extends its best wishes to Russia in hosting a successful Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi in February next year. We also wish China every success in hosting the second Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing in August 2014. We believe that through these Games, sports and the Olympic vision will remain a force for good and peace in this uncertain world.

Ms. Cousens (United States of America): The United States is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution entitled “Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal” (A/68/L.8). We especially want to draw attention to the language in the draft resolution “calling upon host countries to promote social inclusion without discrimination of any kind”. This is the first time that language of that kind appears in a resolution on the Olympic Truce, and it sends a powerful message highlighting the role that sport plays for all people. The phrase emphasizes the importance of the inclusion and participation of all people in sporting activity, regardless of identity, including persons of different sexual orientations and gender identities.

In its recitation of the fundamental principles of Olympism, the Olympic Charter states that

“[e]very individual must have the possibility of practicing sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play”.

Many of the most inspirational moments in the Olympics have come through the ever-broadening participation of persons of various backgrounds in the Games, including Native American Jim Thorpe's decathlon and pentathlon gold medals in the 1912 Olympics; the four gold medals African-American Jesse Owens won at the 1936 Berlin Olympics; the three 1960 gold medals of Wilma Rudolph, an African-American woman stricken with polio at age 4 whose childhood doctors feared she might never walk without wearing a leg brace; and the recent inspirational performance of South African Caster Semenya, who faced unprecedented challenges and unfair gender testing in 2009, only to return proudly and medal in the London Games, where her teammates selected her for the honour of serving as her nation's flag-bearer during the opening ceremony.

Part of what makes sport so important is that it promotes inclusion, bringing together people of different ages, races, religions, social status, disabilities, sexual orientation and gender identity. Sport embraces all segments of society and is instrumental in empowering people of diverse backgrounds, while fostering tolerance and respect for all people, no matter what they look like, where they come from, where they worship, or whom they love.

Mr. Silwamba (Zambia): Zambia believes that sports can play an important role in our societies. Sports promote excellence and a healthier lifestyle and is a wonderful way of bringing people together from all walks of life. In Zambia, sports has been a means of recreation, promoting healthier life styles and, more importantly, transmitting life-serving messages, especially to young people. Sports has helped my country, especially its young, by keeping them away from vices such as drug abuse, premarital and unprotected sex, and beer drinking, among other bad habits. Sport has also been an avenue that has helped to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Sports knows neither gender, tribe, race nor religious affiliation. It is a unifier of humankind. The Government of the Republic of Zambia is encouraging gender mainstreaming in sports and urges more girls and women to get involved in games. In that regard, the Zambian Government has seen an increase in women participating and winning prizes in sports tournaments. Many women are now participating in boxing, a sport traditionally regarded as a male preserve. Furthermore, sports is now incorporated into school programmes, with regular tournaments held in various disciplines

among schools, colleges, universities and other learning institutions.

As the world grapples with the issue of high unemployment, sport is becoming a sector that is undeniably creating employment, particularly among the young. In a bid to encourage Zambians to get more involved in sports, our Members of Parliament from all political parties regularly play football and other games. A football team of Zambian Members of Parliament has from time to time hosted informal games with their counterparts from Malawi and other countries of the Southern African Development Community. It is gratifying to report that our Members of Parliament have also engaged diplomats accredited to Zambia in sports competitions as a means of enhancing mutual understanding and improve mutual cooperation.

My Government encourages the private sector, as part of its corporate social responsibility, to support sports in all parts of the country. Working with several partners, including the International Olympics Committee (IOC) and friendly countries like China, the Zambian Government has embarked on the construction of sports infrastructure, including large-capacity football stadiums, in various parts of the country. To our gratification, the International Olympic Committee in 2010 constructed the Olympic Youth Development Centre in the capital city, Lusaka. The Centre is a pilot-project in the series of multi-sport facilities scheduled to be built in developing countries as part of the International Olympic Committee's Sports for Hope programme.

The Centre in Lusaka comprises football and hockey pitches, a running track, tennis courts, a boxing ring and multi-purpose areas that can accommodate such sports as basketball, handball, weight-lifting, volleyball, judo and gymnastics. The Olympic Youth Development Centre is home to some 10,906 children aged between 10 and 17 years who are registered and actively participate in various sporting activities there. Of these, 6,624 are male and 4,282 are female. Between 500 and 700 children and youths visit the Centre on a daily basis. The Centre offers a wide range of educational programmes, health services and community activities aimed at improving young people's quality of life.

Thousands of athletes from Zambia and neighbouring countries have already been to the Olympic Youth Development Centre for training. Since its inception, it has hosted international tournaments with four to eight countries participating. The Centre

has embarked on a programme to build accommodation facilities to house athletes from other parts of Africa during training camps and tournaments.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and International Olympics Committee President Mr. Jacques Rogge visited the Centre on 25 February 2012 to encourage youth participation in sports. My Government appreciates such support and calls upon our partners to continue working with us to ensure that the Centre continues to be a model of excellence and a model that can be replicated in other parts of the world. Zambia reaffirms its commitment to promoting sports and to encourage the young and old alike to get involved in one form of sport or another for their well-being.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): Before the first Olympic torch was lit and before a ball was kicked for the first time in the World Cup, sports had become part of our social and cultural identity. Many types of sport have evolved since and the spirit of the competition carried by each sport is no longer just about winning or losing. It has gone beyond that. Sport is associated with everything that defines us as human: courage, determination, emotions, perseverance, acceptance, discipline, teamwork and much more.

Sport somehow has a unique charisma to attract, mobilize and inspire people all around the world. It is like a language that we all speak and understand. It plays a significant role as a social instrument that can promote social integration and economic development, strengthen social ties and networks, and promote the ideals of peace, fraternity, solidarity, non-violence, tolerance and justice.

As a developing nation, Malaysia has identified sport as a medium that serves as a catalyst to its nation-building process. Since independence, sport has been seen as a means of contributing to the development of the spirit of nationalism and national integration. In sports, nationalism forms the natural framework into which people unite and structures the valuable consolidation of Malaysia's society. Malaysia is fully aware of the positive influence of sport and will continue to utilize sport and its potential by integrating its values into our national development strategies and approaches in our society's capacity-building process.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Malaysia has outlined its strategic plan for the period 2010-2015 with the objective of encouraging Malaysians from all walks of life to embrace the motto "a healthy mind in a healthy

body". Through the strategic plan, we aim to become a true sporting nation whose people engage in physical exercise and play various sports on a daily basis, emulating positive trends in many countries around the world. Some of the main initiatives to achieve that target include the following.

First, in order to cultivate sports for all, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has undertaken programmes and activities to ensure the participation of all, including through the establishment of a variety of sports clubs; the promotion and demonstration of various sports; the building and upgrading of sports infrastructure and facilities; and the combining of efforts with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health in creating awareness of the merits of being actively engaged in sports and its relationship with good health and good results in education.

Thus far, our efforts, along with relentless awareness campaigns, have yielded encouraging results, as Malaysians show great interest in running, futsal, paintball, cycling, wall-climbing and more. In line with the spirit of ensuring access to sports for all, Malaysia has also undertaken initiatives to promote and raise awareness of sport and disabilities, and is developing that concept to ensure our active participation in various multi-disability competitions, single-disability competitions and single-sport competitions, including the Paralympic Games.

Secondly, in order to strengthen the development of high-performance sports, Malaysia is currently producing champions in certain sports. Nevertheless, we cannot rest on our laurels, because compared to the sport achievements of major sporting countries, there is still a long way to go for Malaysia. Malaysia aims to increase its performance and improve its ranking in several sports by investing in their development, identifying and nurturing talent and producing world-class national coaches via a train-the-trainers programme. The success of that strategic initiative can be measured by only one outcome — the number of medals achieved in international arenas, including the Olympic, Commonwealth and Asian Games.

Thirdly, in terms of developing sport as industry, Malaysia has a vision to create a strong industry based on sport that can boost the economy and further contribute to our gross domestic product. To achieve that, strong partnerships between the corporate sector and the sporting industry must be fostered. Progress towards achieving that goal is on the right track, with

Malaysia being continually entrusted to host various international sporting events, such as Formula 1, MotoGP, Le Tour de Langkawi and regattas in Selangor, Kedah, Terengganu and Sarawak, to name a few.

Malaysia's efforts are not confined to our national initiatives. Through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) ministerial meeting on sports, Malaysia pursues its interest in sport development and lends its support to ASEAN and its various bodies, including the ASEAN Football Federation, ASEAN Basketball League, ASEAN Volleyball Tournament and ASEAN Para Sports Federation. Realizing ASEAN's potential for sport in a region of 600 million people, Malaysia has proposed that 2013 be designated the ASEAN Sports Industry Year, a proposal that was accepted by the ASEAN ministerial meeting on sports. Malaysia is optimistic that the sports industry will benefit ASEAN, as the latter is moving towards becoming a single community by 2015.

The free movement of trades and goods will also accelerate the growth of the sports industry, which presents valuable commercial opportunities through an open market, allowing larger cross-border transactions in sponsorships, licensing and merchandising; sports tourism; and broadcasting distribution rights. In addition, the sports industry will also encourage the growth of areas related to sports medicine, marketing, events and management.

In conjunction with the ASEAN Sports Industry Year, Malaysia will convene MYSportsFest this year, an event that will feature 100 sports-related activities, including competitions, exhibitions, carnivals, sports clinics and talent searches. Apart from encouraging Malaysians to lead a healthy lifestyle, MYSportsFest will provide an opportunity for companies involved in the sports industry to promote their products.

While sports alone cannot prevent conflict or build peace, it can assist in peacebuilding interventions. Sports can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding among peoples and nations. Through collaboration and cooperation, Governments should strengthen their efforts to use sports to overcome development challenges and, in turn, achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

To conclude, Malaysia believes in the concept of sport for development and peace, as it transcends sociocultural and political barriers. The ability of sport to reach millions of people all over the world and its

potential to empower, motivate and inspire is amazing and has no boundaries.

Mr. Roet (Israel): On behalf of the State of Israel, I would like to thank the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Wilfried Lemke, for his important work encouraging dialogue, collaboration and partnership.

Israel is proud to be one of the sponsors of today's draft resolution (A/68/L.8), which focuses on sport as a rallying point. It is interesting that sport, which brings people to compete against one another, can transcend differences and establish common ground. Put more simply, sport fosters friendship, cooperation and understanding. Sport has the ability to touch hearts and minds and bring tangible benefits to every corner of the globe.

Throughout the world, there are hundreds of non-profit organizations that seek to bridge cultural divides and eliminate hatred through sport. In Israel, the Peres Center for Peace was founded by Israel's President Peres to further his vision of having people in the Middle East work together in genuine friendship.

One of the programmes run by the Center is the Twinned Peace Sport Schools. It is the longest-running coexistence sport project in the Middle East. Every year, close to 2,000 Israeli and Palestinian children participate in programmes with twinned communities across the country. The project fosters peace and coexistence between young Palestinians and Israelis by challenging stereotypes. Palestinian and Israeli children unite under a common banner to cheer each other on and build lasting friendships. Programmes like those have two goals: teaching children how to score goals and, more importantly, teaching them mutual respect, equity and reciprocity. In the process, they can heal wounds, mend fences and overcome differences.

Sadly, not all sporting events have been driven by those ideals. We recall the 1972 Olympic Games massacre in Munich, when Palestinian terrorists killed 11 Israeli athletes, coaches and a referee under the interlocking rings of the Olympic banner. It is regrettable that, more than 40 years after the Munich massacre, the International Olympic Committee has refused all requests to observe a moment of silence in their honour. The memory of that inhumane act is still felt in Israel and is a warning for the ages that sports cannot be used as a vehicle for incitement and hatred.

While we like to think that the days of discrimination are behind us, Israel continues to suffer from prejudice in certain sporting arenas. Only weeks ago, a Tunisian athlete was ordered to forfeit a quarterfinal match against his Israeli opponent in the Association of Tennis Professionals Challenger Tour tennis tournament in Uzbekistan. That flies in the face of everything that sportsmanship represents.

Today, we must recommit to advancing sports and ensuring that every athlete is given the opportunity to compete. We must commit to being the torchbearers of the true Olympic spirit, ensuring that sport carries connotations of peace, harmony and tolerance and that it is not hijacked by those committed to fundamentalist ideologies. Sporting initiatives in Israel break down boundaries such as class, religion, race and even physical abilities. Such institutions as the Israel Sports Center for the Disabled are helping to integrate every member of society. By encouraging youth with disabilities to participate in sports, the organization is helping heal psychological and physical wounds while building self-confidence.

Israel is sharing its experience using sports to promote peace and tolerance with countries throughout the developing world. Mifalot is the largest and most diverse sport-for-development and peace organization in the Middle East. With over 300 programmes, Mifalot harnesses the power and popularity of football to build compassionate and cohesive communities. From leadership training to assisting new immigrants, Mifalot helps thousands of people with educational and social needs. Today, Mifalot applies its successful model to utilize football — the world's game — as a platform for social change in countries ranging from Jordan to Rwanda and from Haiti to Nigeria.

As Israel's President Shimon Peres said, "Peace should be done not only among Governments but among people". Sports have the ability to unite us, but only if the politics of coexistence come before the politics of hate and division. We encourage all people in the Middle East and throughout the world to use sports to promote coexistence, to learn from one another and to foster peace and harmony.

Mr. Umemoto (Japan): Japan highly appreciates the efforts made by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; his Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Wilfried Lemke; and Mr. John Ashe and Mr. Vuk Jeremić, the current and the former Presidents

of the General Assembly, towards achieving human development and peace through sport.

Sports can connect the world. Sports are capable of uniting and inspiring people in a way that transcends differences such as nationality, ethnicity, gender and political persuasion. Sports are a gift that can be shared by all, despite our varying abilities. It is for reasons such as those that Japan is strongly committed to conveying and sharing the joy of sports and creating a better world through sport. In line with that commitment, we believe that sport should be promoted by the international community and that it should be made available and accessible to all. No one should be left out, and in particular, women and people with disabilities should be able to enjoy the same benefits and pleasures of sports as everyone else.

Japan appreciates the various efforts of the international community to promote the positive use of sports to build a peaceful and better world. For example, Japan, as a sponsor, welcomes resolution 67/296, on the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, which was adopted in August under the initiative of the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). I would also like to commend the Russian Federation for promoting this year's draft resolution A/68/L.8, on the Olympic Truce. Japan, as a sponsor of the draft resolution, strongly supports its spirit of building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal. We firmly believe that the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games to be hosted in Sochi next year will realize the ideals and objectives of the draft resolution.

On 7 September, Tokyo was selected to host the 2020 Olympic Games. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all those who supported Tokyo's candidacy to host the Games. I also wish to heartily commend the tireless efforts of the campaigns conducted by both Madrid and Istanbul. We were in a truly neck-and-neck competition right down to the very final moments.

Towards the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, we are committed to conveying and sharing the joy of sports and creating a better world through sport. To that end, as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stated in the IOC session, Japan will further contribute to the Olympic movement by implementing various programmes under our new plan Sports for Tomorrow, targeted towards more than 10 million people in more than 100 countries, including developing countries, over the next seven years.

Specifically, we intend to concentrate on the improvement of sports facilities, cooperation in sports curricula design and the development of international human resources in the sporting arena through invitational programmes and by dispatching coaches and athletes. In addition, we will work closely with concerned organizations in further strengthening international anti-doping activities.

Japan will continue to collaborate with Mr. Lemke and the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP). Among its initiatives, Tokyo will host the UNOSDP Youth Leadership Camp in January next year.

In the wake of the earthquake of 2011, the people of Japan received warm support and encouragement from the IOC and the international sports community. The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in London served as a great source of inspiration to the people of Japan, and once again opened our eyes to the inherent power of sports to inspire dreams, hopes and aspirations and to strengthen the bonds between people, thus experiencing ourselves the power of sport to make the world a better place.

Now it is our turn to do the same. Towards the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan will strengthen our contribution to the achievement of human development and peace through sports. Japan will make every effort so that the 2020 Olympic Games can captivate and inspire people all over the world. We look forward to the Assembly's support and cooperation.

Mr. Kebret (Ethiopia): Ethiopia recognizes the historical and diverse roles of sport, be it in the form of competitive sports, physical activities or play. Indeed, sports not only are physical exercise and games, but also have the universal potential power and means to an end in the sphere of economic, political and social change and/or development, as well as in the promotion of peace and cultural understanding in every society. Hence, sport has become a universal phenomenon and a language of communication and information that have a potential positive impact on human relations. This is not only because sport possesses such unique attributes not only for developing healthy human relations in society and with respect to the peaceful relationship and coexistence of States, but also because it has long been recognized as an essential factor in the realization of development and peace objectives.

In recognition of the central and inherent potential role that global and traditional sports play in economic and social development, Ethiopia has made sport one of its development priorities and been actively working to promote and develop national sports by incorporating them into our overall development agenda, including in our international relations, in order to develop and further strengthen bonds of friendship and cooperation.

At the national level, the Government has developed a comprehensive national sport policy and strategic implementation plans. The basic objectives of this policy are to enhance the participation of the community in traditional and modern sports and to make sporting activities accessible to all, consistent with their capacities and preferences, so as to realize the fundamental rights of citizens to the enjoyment of sports. The policy also aims to register great achievements of international scope by tapping the huge potential resources existing in communities, and in particular among young people, by creating awareness and enabling environments for various societal purposes.

More importantly, we are exerting every effort to use sport to foster social integration, development and peace, further promote our national image, enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities, ensure that all schools provide opportunities for students to engage in physical exercise during and after school, improve the quality of education, bring about sustainable economic development, promote employment and curb poverty, and recognize and motivate sport volunteerism in national and local sport events by making it an integral and indispensable part of our sport initiatives. In short, our Government has been running community-, school- and youth-based sport development programmes with a view to realizing our people's basic right of participation in sport and leisure activities.

Obviously, ensuring and sustaining community sport and developing elite sport programmes across the country requires the investment of a huge amount of resources. In other words, sport development or promotion through increasing public participation cannot be achieved by one particular body alone; implementation must be supported with adequate resources and a broad range of individual, societal and international organizations on the basis of partnerships. Accordingly, changing our existing low-level sport development requires the optimal involvement of all stakeholders as partners. Sport, as a cross-cutting

issue, therefore needs the action-oriented collaboration of all relevant bodies, such as the United Nations and its agencies and international sporting organizations.

Unfortunately, in that regard, few or no meaningful partnerships have been established. For this reason, we are aware of the need to effectively implement our policy for improving national sport development and to work on resource- and capacity-development programmes in partnership with development agencies, United Nations bodies and international sport movements. It is only when we act decisively and in collaboration that we can harness the power of sport for realization of development and peace endeavours.

My delegation therefore calls upon the international community, sport partners and other stakeholders to develop and establish partnerships for meaningful and beneficial cooperation in the field of sport to enhance its positive contribution to the sustainable development and promotion of lasting peace.

Finally, I wish to announce on behalf of my delegation that Ethiopia is glad to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/68/L.8, introduced by the Russian Federation.

Mrs. Kazragienė (Lithuania): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

The adoption of draft resolution A/68/L.8, entitled “Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, would put the indispensable interaction between peace and sport on the front page. The European Union and its member States remain faithful advocates of the values of Olympism and will spare no effort in promoting the Olympic Truce as an effective means of building peace and solidarity.

The Olympic Games have always been inherently associated with the ideal of truce. We consider sport to be an invaluable tool to encourage dialogue and effectively mobilize the world for the accomplishment of peace. Furthermore, the concept of the Olympic Truce provides us with a unique opportunity to achieve the cessation of hostilities, even temporarily, and to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

This year, draft resolution A/68/L.8 increases the period of the observance of the Olympic Truce from seven days before the beginning until seven days after the conclusion of the Games. Moreover, it encourages

the Olympic and Paralympic movements to cooperate with national and international sports organizations on the use of sport for the purpose of contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In addition, acknowledging the contribution of the volunteer movement to the Olympic Games, the draft resolution calls on host countries to promote social inclusion without discrimination of any kind and recognize the role of sports in building tolerance and mutual understanding.

We believe that the international community must seek to address and fight all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender orientation, disability, age, religion, political or other opinion, national, social or ethnic origin, or any other grounds and to promote respect for diversity.

In conclusion, allow me to restate our commitment to support the peaceful resolution of existing conflicts and use this opportunity to urge all Member States to send a message of unity and to preserve the Olympic Truce during the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi.

Mrs. Gatto (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and wishes to make the following additional remarks in its national capacity.

Italy welcomes the imminent adoption of draft resolution A/68/L.8 today and is proud to be among its sponsors. The strong consensus that we expect today in the General Assembly demonstrates that the ideal of the Olympic truce is alive and powerful. We must now translate that commitment into reality. Looking at the many conflicts taking place around the world, the challenge seems daunting, yet ancient history is there to prove that strong ideals backed by serious political commitment can overcome such challenges.

Italy appreciates the new elements introduced into the draft resolution this year, in particular the extension of the period of truce from seven days prior to the beginning to seven days following the conclusion of the Games, in line with the Greek tradition. The draft resolution also recognizes the important role of the International Olympic and Paralympic Committees, as well as their partnership with the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace. Along with civil society organizations and the media, they are actors who are crucial to raising awareness of the extraordinary opportunity represented by the Olympic Truce. Special

efforts must be devoted to mobilizing the young people of the world.

Italy is a strong believer in sport as a powerful tool and vehicle for promoting peace and development. In 2009 we actively supported the adoption of resolution 64/3, granting observer status to the International Olympic Committee. Last year in the United Nations we introduced the Intercampus Programme, a non-profit social initiative of the Italian soccer team F.C. Internazionale providing assistance to needy children and young people in 24 countries around the world. Its aim is to give back to those children their right to play. Through football programmes, young people learn teamwork and the meaning of fair play, and gain access to health and education services often absent from their own villages. Intercampus proves that sport can make a difference in the daily lives of many people around the world.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon once said, sport has become a world language, a common denominator that breaks down all the walls, all the barriers. We hope that next February sport will speak the language of peace and inclusivity. It is in that spirit that we wish the Russian Federation every success in organizing the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi.

Mr. Lazarev (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus welcomes draft resolution A/68/L.8, entitled “Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, before the Assembly today. Belarus has joined the list of the draft resolution’s sponsors.

We welcome this recognition of the importance of observing the Olympic principles at the high level of a General Assembly resolution. The draft resolution we will adopt today can serve as a foundation basis for the future strengthening and observation of the principle of the Olympic Truce. That can be ensured if States, the United Nations, the International Olympic Committee and the chief officials of those organizations play an active role in promoting and protecting the Olympic ideals.

We are convinced that the politicization of issues relating to sport and the Olympic Games is contrary to the principles of friendly and civilized international relations, the ideals and principles of sport and the spirit and letter of the Olympic Charter. Unfortunately, the last Summer Olympic Games showed that not all

countries are prepared to meet their obligations to abide in good faith by the Olympic principles to which they commit when they are given the lofty honour of organizing the Olympic Games. We are convinced that such actions should be appropriately evaluated at the international level, particularly on the part and at the initiative of the leadership of the International Olympic Committee and the United Nations. Unfortunately, that mechanism is not yet functioning effectively.

Belarus is convinced that the XXII Winter Olympic Games and XI Winter Paralympic Games in Sochi will be conducted at a high level and will be a visible affirmation of the contribution that sport and the Olympic movement make to building a peaceful and happy world. We wish our Russian colleagues every success in the preparation and holding of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Mr. Tsymbaliuk (Ukraine): Ukraine has traditionally recognized the value of sport in building a peaceful and better world, promoting tolerance, equality and understanding among people and nations. Through its unique power to bring us together, sport can transcend boundaries and unite people irrespective of their race, religion or political views.

The Government of Ukraine firmly believes in sport’s potential to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to make a real difference in people’s lives, including those from the most vulnerable groups. In Ukraine sport and physical education are considered as part of a broader perspective on promoting healthy lifestyles and constitute a strategic priority in Government policy. We believe that a holistic multisectoral approach to sport can be very effective in helping to achieve the MDGs, including those relating to health and education.

Guided by the noble ideals and principles of the Paralympic movement, Ukraine pays particular attention to the use of sport as a means to rehabilitate persons with disabilities and enhance their social inclusion. My country runs a unique State sports institution, the Ukrainian Centre for Physical Education and Sport for Persons with Disabilities. It consists of 27 regional centres and 106 local offices, with 26 sport schools for children with disabilities. More than 50,000 persons with disabilities actively practice sport and use it for rehabilitation.

Ukraine is committed to promoting sport as a means to advance peace and development around the

world. Last year, as a contribution to that goal, Ukraine, together with Poland, hosted the fourteenth Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) championship. It was the first UEFA championship held in Eastern Europe, and it is our sincere hope that this major event succeeded in contributing to a renewed spirit of friendship and solidarity in the region and to its social and economic development as a whole. In 2013 we hosted the thirty-second Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championship, as well as world youth championships in boxing and athletics, and in 2015 we will host the thirty-ninth European Basketball Championship.

I have the pleasure to inform the General Assembly that yesterday the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine, supported by the Government of Ukraine, officially declared its intention to hold the 2022 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Lviv. Our vision for the Games goes far beyond economic outlook, improved infrastructure, new facilities or promoting Ukraine's global image. For us it is rather about developing a legacy for future generations built on our collective respect for sport and its basic values — friendship, goodwill, tolerance and fair play in competition. We have launched a national project, Olympic Hope — 2022, in support of realizing this initiative, with the aim of creating a sports and tourism infrastructure in Ukraine suitable for hosting the 2022 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

My delegation commends the continued work of the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace and of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Wilfried Lemke, in advocating sport as a tool for achieving peacebuilding, development and humanitarian objectives. We would like to assure them of our full support for their activities. Ukraine is also pleased to be a sponsor of today's draft resolution and would like to wish our Russian colleagues well-deserved success with the upcoming Winter Games in Sochi.

Ms. Hewanpola (Australia): Australia is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/68/L.8, entitled "Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

As a proud sporting nation and a past Olympics host, Australia appreciates the valuable contribution that sport and the Olympics have made to enabling people to cross language, cultural and geographic

divides, to inspire and unite us all, and to promote peace, cooperation, intercultural understanding, education and development. In that regard, we acknowledge and support the efforts of the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee, and the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace in areas including poverty alleviation, gender equality, health promotion, child and youth education, HIV/AIDS prevention, peacebuilding and sustainable development.

Clearly, the Olympics has an important role to play in contributing to the promotion of social inclusion; in bringing together people of differing ages, genders, races, cultures, faiths and status; in educating people on such traditional values as respect, diversity, tolerance and fairness; and in combating all forms of discrimination, including on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. We commend the inclusion of the simple but comprehensive language in the draft resolution calling on all host countries of the Olympic Games to promote social inclusion without discrimination of any kind.

The realization of the Sochi 2014 cultural and educational programmes, which aim to promote cultural diversity and enhance understanding between diverse communities, can also contribute to our peaceful coexistence. Australia looks forward to participating in the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Winter Games.

Mr. Elshareef (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Sudan would like to express its continued support for the biannual resolution first adopted in 2011 and entitled "Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", which is before us today as draft resolution A/68/L.8.

The Sudan recognizes that all forms of sports have since time immemorial played an important and effective role in building and promoting relations among diverse peoples and nations. Sports has played an important role in modern times both in bringing people closer and in effecting a thaw between countries with heretofore very icy relations. The delegation of the Sudan appreciates the central role played by sports in promoting the values of patience, cooperation, perseverance, respect for others and tireless efforts.

The Sudan, convinced of the importance and value of sports, including traditional ones, in all societies,

has promoted sports policies to consolidate the values I have mentioned and to employ the energies of youth in fruitful activities that help to forge a national identity, thereby contributing to the Sudan's national development efforts, to the creation of an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding among nations and peoples, and to the promotion of the culture of peace. Against that backdrop and in that spirit, my delegation would like to pay tribute to all the international bodies that promote the role of sports across the globe.

We wish every success to the organizers of the XXII Winter Olympics, to be held next year in Sochi in the Russian Federation. My delegation also acknowledges the establishment of the Russian International Olympic University in Sochi, which will be dedicated to promoting knowledge and lofty Olympic values, ideals and traditions, including the activities of the International Olympic Committee. The delegation of the Sudan also welcomes the reference in the draft resolution to the use of sports to promote peace and reconciliation in conflict zones.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Sudan has supported and co-sponsored the draft resolution before the Assembly today.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with resolution 64/3, of 19 October 2009, I now give the floor to the President of the International Olympic Committee.

Mr. Bach (International Olympic Committee) (*spoke in French*): The International Olympic Committee (IOC) presents its compliments to the General Assembly and is honoured to have the opportunity to address the Assembly today, just three months before the opening of the 2014 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in Sochi, in the framework of the debate on the draft resolution entitled "Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/68/L.8).

I wish to thank all those who made it possible for us to be here today. The IOC expresses its most sincere gratitude to the Government of the Russian Federation and its representatives to the United Nations; to the Sochi 2014 Organizing Committee and its president, Mr. Dmitry Chernyshenko; to the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace; and to the United Nations Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, Mr. Wilfried Lemke. Once again, we ask for support for the Olympic Truce.

(*spoke in English*)

"Olympic principles are United Nations principles," said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his keynote speech to the 2009 Olympic Congress in Copenhagen. Our bond became even stronger after the General Assembly granted the IOC Permanent Observer status that same year.

Olympic principles are United Nations principles. That is just as true today as the General Assembly addresses a tradition dating back thousands of years ago in ancient Greece — the *ekecheiria*. That sacred truce, the Olympic Truce, is based on the tradition that followed an agreement among three ancient Greek kings. At that time, the Olympic Games were the only bond that linked the Greeks. There was no political unity. Only the Games brought Greeks from the mainland and the colonies together, just for a few days every four years. The *ekecheiria* ensured a halt to hostilities, allowing athletes and spectators to travel safely to and from Olympia.

This shows that even thousands of years ago, a partnership between sports and politics already existed. That partnership has been, and is, not without its frictions, but it endures. Now is the time to adapt it for today's world.

Our partnership today has a completely different dimension. At the time three city-States came together. At the United Nations today we are talking about an association of 193 States, and, at the International Olympic Committee, 204 recognized National Olympic Committees. That is a new dimension of the challenge in our partnership between politics and sport.

The IOC is, above all, a sports organization: sport is its first priority. The IOC recognizes its obligation to youth and society by contributing to the betterment of the quality of life, in accordance with its fundamental principles as set out in the Olympic Charter, namely:

"to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity".

That describes universal values and goals similar to those of the United Nations.

Sport is a good starting point for putting those values and goals into practice, being truly the only area of human existence to have achieved what is known

in political philosophy as universal law and in moral philosophy as a global ethic. Regardless of where in the world we practise sport, the rules are the same. They are recognized worldwide. They are based on a common global ethic of fair play, tolerance and friendship. But to apply this universal law worldwide and spread our values globally, sport has to enjoy responsible autonomy. Politics must respect that sporting autonomy, for only then can sport organizations implement those universal values amid all the differing laws, customs and traditions.

Responsible autonomy does not mean that sport should operate in a law-free environment. It does mean that we respect national laws that are not targeted against sport and its organizations alone, sometimes for chiefly political reasons.

In many States Members of the United Nations, the fact that sport can hold its international competitions and promote its values only if enjoying autonomy is not always understood or accepted. For that reason, I ask members to take this message back to their countries: in the mutual interests of both sport and politics, please help to protect and strengthen the autonomy of sport. Only in that way can we create the win-win situation of a fruitful partnership for the benefit of youth and society in general.

Naturally, that means that sport, too, must live up to its responsibilities. Our partners in politics, whom we expect to respect our autonomy, are entitled to expect that we exercise that autonomy responsibly, and in accordance with the rules of good governance. The IOC sets an example in that regard. We want the Universal Principles of Good Governance of the Olympic Movement to be accepted as a minimum standard and implemented at all levels of sport.

Within that partnership, sport must remain politically neutral. That does not mean that sport is apolitical. Sport must include political considerations in its decisions. It must also consider the political, economic and social implications of its decisions. That is true in particular when choosing the venues for major sports events — above all, of the largest and most important of those, the Olympic Games.

With the Olympic Games, the IOC sets an example of peaceful interaction. The Olympic Games, the Olympic athletes and in particular the Olympic Village are a powerful symbol of that. They break down the barriers of cultural differences. They serve as an

example of mutual respect and non-discrimination. And it is always moving, not least for me as a former athlete, to see how, in the Olympic Village, young people from all parts of the world live together harmoniously and peacefully in one place. There the Olympic spirit is alive.

Beyond that, Organizing Committees are increasingly taking up the vision of the Olympic Truce. The London 2012 programme offered young people in every school and college across the United Kingdom a chance to take part in sporting and cultural activities, which helped encourage peace in their schools and communities.

The Sochi 2014 youth initiatives are also aimed at promoting peace, harmony and respect. As part of that programme, the Sochi Organizing Committee is devoting a great deal of attention to working with young people all over Russia, as well as internationally, while drawing their attention to peace, tolerance and participation.

Going beyond the Games themselves, the IOC seeks to set examples of mutual understanding and solidarity. Through the programmes run by Olympic Solidarity, the International Sports Federation and the National Olympic Committees, we emphasize that striving for peace also requires sustainable development, solidarity and support. In the current Olympiad, the Olympic family is investing more than \$600 million into putting that solidarity into practice.

Precisely because many of our principles are the same, it must always be clear in the relationship between sport and politics that the role of sport is always to build bridges; it is never to build walls. Sport stands for dialogue and understanding, which transcend all differences. Sport, and the Olympic Movement especially, understands the global diversity of cultures, societies and life designs as a source of richness. We never accuse or exclude anyone.

For that reason, we oppose boycotts of any kind. Boycotts are a fundamental contradiction to the spirit of sport, depriving it of the means to continue working for peace, mutual understanding and solidarity. This is even more true if sport is the sole instrument misused for the boycott, while political, economic and cultural relations continue as normal.

If the IOC and the United Nations stand side by side in this partnership, understood in this way, even

more fruitful cooperation is possible, in particular in the areas of education, development, integration and efforts for peace.

Sport is not just physical activity; it promotes health and helps prevent, or even cure, the diseases of modern civilization. It is also an educational tool that fosters cognitive development, teaches social behaviour and helps to integrate communities. For that reason, we offer even more intensive dialogue with the United Nations and its agencies, in particular UNESCO. Education and learning are the keys to the future of all our societies.

Mens sana in corpore sano. That old Latin phrase puts the idea in a nutshell — a healthy mind in a healthy body. I therefore plead for the educational asset that sport represents and that the teaching of values through sport be included in school curriculums all over the world. Both our organizations feel obliged to help young people enjoy a better future. The IOC therefore welcomes the Secretary-General's United Nations youth strategy and the appointment of the Envoy on Youth. We are thankful for the contribution of United Nations agencies to the Culture and Education Programme at the Youth Olympic Games.

In order to work together even more closely, we suggest enhancing our cooperation with respect to sport as an instrument for development and peace. We applaud the General Assembly's historic decision in August to establish the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (resolution 67/296). In that context, the General Assembly recalled the IOC's role in promoting healthy lifestyles and creating access to sport for as many people as possible. Sport promotes integration; it boosts self-esteem and *joie de vivre*, which can play an important role in the integration of societies, including in crisis areas, where the IOC works with humanitarian and development agencies. We are prepared to do even more. The integrative power of sport can work its magic in crisis areas, helping to build understanding and reconciliation while, at the same time, improving quality of life.

All such measures can be ways to build a better and more peaceful world. We know, of course, that, as in ancient Greece, sport and the Olympic Games cannot on their own solve political problems or achieve peace. Peacebuilding is a long process. Sport wants to be part of that process. We are aware of our limits, but we want to use the power of our values and symbols to promote the positive, peaceful development of global society. Those

symbols, and in particular the peaceful competition at the Olympic Games, should inspire all people. They should show that rivalries and disputes can be resolved peacefully. They should show that people can transcend all boundaries by agreeing on universal rules to govern human competition and resolve conflicts. For that reason, the Olympic Truce is of particular significance. We set great store by that common endeavour, which is such a splendid example of how, through partnership, politics and sport can complement each other.

We are grateful to the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for the fruitful cooperation that has been built on trust. Together with the political authorities, the IOC wishes to set an example for peace and solidarity in the quest for a more humane society. Our partnership clearly illustrates that Olympic principles are United Nations principles. Let us work together to make those universal principles a reality.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 11.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.8.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): Sporting events, and above all the Olympic Games, provide us with a unique opportunity to celebrate the supremacy of peace over conflict and the pre-eminence of friendship over hostility. The peaceful spirit and ritual in which the Games were held in ancient Greece 28 centuries ago still inspire and encourage all countries to be part of such a special experience every four years. They contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance, solidarity and confidence among different peoples and nations.

It is precisely that noble character of the Olympic Games that explains our decision today not to undermine the consensual nature of the draft resolution (A/68/L.8) introduced today. Yet, while we all have once again reaffirmed our willingness to further the role of sport in building a peaceful and safe world, we need to acknowledge that, unfortunately, reality often casts a shadow on our declared aspirations. Not only is the very notion of the Olympic Truce being distorted, the Olympics are also being used to divert attention

from acts of violence and military aggression and veil abuses and violations of human rights and freedoms.

While we are looking forward to once again reviving the Olympic Truce, we need to remember that only 40 kilometres from Sochi, an occupation is taking place; indeed, the country hosting the Games continues to occupy 20 per cent of Georgia's sovereign territory in violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country. In addition, while in the draft resolution we recognize that the Olympic Truce provides humanitarian opportunities, it is important to consider that, in fact, the occupied regions of Georgia are still blocked for humanitarian access and the local population is deprived of humanitarian assistance.

Despite the crucial political, security and humanitarian context, the Government of Georgia opted for the depoliticization of the Olympics, the idea of which is founded on peace and should lead to cooperation. In October 2012, the new Government of Georgia made a difficult decision to stop boycotting the Sochi Olympics. Furthermore, that decision showed the Government of Georgia's willingness to de-escalate the existing crisis between Russia and Georgia and normalize relations in humanitarian or people-to-people spheres.

Unfortunately, in January 2013, shortly after the declaration of Georgia's constructive decision, the occupation forces began the large-scale installation of barbed-wire fences and embankments along the occupation line in the Tskhinvali and Abkhazia regions of Georgia. Those illegal activities significantly affect the livelihoods of the local population, divide families and communities, prevent people-to-people contacts, and deprive the people of their fundamental rights and freedoms. We hope that the installation of the aforementioned artificial obstacles will not be resumed and will be reversed.

We further regret that, in response to the Government of Georgia's demonstration of goodwill, Moscow decided to use the Olympic Games for political purposes and opted for still more provocative acts, including naming "the August war hero", pilot Ivan Nechaev — so called because of his excellence in bombing Georgian villages — one of the Olympic torchbearers. Such a politicized approach totally disregards and contradicts the genesis of the draft resolution.

However, despite the difficult political context and notwithstanding the destabilizing process and provocative acts illustrated heretofore, Georgia remains fully committed to its peaceful and constructive approach, the spirit of the present draft resolution and the common international interest. We are therefore not going to break the consensus and remain in favour of the draft resolution.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.8, entitled "Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/68/L.8, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Benin, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iceland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Seychelles, the Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.8?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/9).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Brazil.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): As the first country to sponsor the text contained in resolution 66/5, "Sport for peace and development: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal,"

adopted by consensus in October 2011, and adopted once again here today in resolution 68/9, Brazil is committed to the promotion of sports as an instrument for development and peace. Sports are deeply rooted in Brazilian culture and society, and our Constitution recognizes its practice as a fundamental social right.

We find ourselves at the beginning of a sports-centred decade. In the next few years, Brazil will host important mega-events: the World Cup of the International Federation of Association Football, in 2014, and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2016. The decision to host those events took into account not only their positive impact on disseminating the Olympic ideals throughout Brazilian society, particularly among youth, but also the promotion of sustainable development and social inclusiveness. The preparation process for those events includes sensitizing and educating the public on the need to promote diversity and to combat racism and discrimination.

At the twenty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council in September, Brazil was a member of the core group that presented resolution 24/1, entitled “Promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal”, adopted by consensus with more than 130 sponsors. The resolution recognizes sport as a universal language that can help educate people on the values of respect, diversity, tolerance and fairness. It is an important tool in the fight against discrimination of any kind.

Brazil is a strong advocate for Human Rights Council resolution 17/19 on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity, and an active member of the LGBT core group at the United Nations. In September, Brazil took a decisive stand in support of the joint ministerial declaration on ending violence and discrimination against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. In the spirit of building a peaceful world through sports and without discrimination, we will welcome the world to our country as host of the 2014 soccer World Cup and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2016.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): One representative has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would remind him that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are compelled to exercise our right to reply to the statement made by Georgia. Only a few minutes ago, the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said that we should refrain from the political exploitation of sports. Unfortunately, that appeal was not heard by the delegation of Georgia. We regret that even as we discuss the theme of the Olympic Truce, which is by definition is a uniter of people, the Georgian delegation could not refrain from its habitual attacks on Russia. That may be explained by the fact that it was Georgia itself that, on the eve of the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, launched an attack on the people of South Ossetia and even on Russian peacekeepers.

Now, instead of showing the political will and desire to normalize the situation in the region, and instead of using this unique opportunity to show its respect for the tradition of the Olympic Truce, the Georgian delegation has once again resorted to fabricated reasons for unjustified accusations against the Russian Federation. We repudiate all of them. The Russian Federation has always followed the ideals and principles of the Olympic Charter and has strictly followed the rules of the IOC regulating the organization of the Olympic Games.

To conclude, I would like to stress that, despite Georgia’s attempts to wage political battle against the Sochi Olympic Games, its athletes and fans will be received in Sochi with all the respect that they deserve.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 11.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.