



General Assembly

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69th plenary meeting
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Official Records

President: Mr. Lajčák (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Andrianarivelo-Razafy (Madagascar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 73

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/490)

(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/72/76, A/72/348 and A/72/358)

Draft resolutions (A/72/L.22, A/72/L.23 and A/72/L.24)

(b) Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/87)

Draft resolution (A/72/L.25)

(c) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I will now read a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

(*spoke in English*)

“Today’s draft resolutions are very important. More people are on the move than ever before.

Some of that movement is out of choice; but far too many people are on the move because they have no other choice — whether it is to escape conflict, natural disasters or other situations. Millions of those people need humanitarian assistance and protection. Every region is affected by one or more of those types of crises. Humanitarian and disaster relief is thus the business of every Member State. It is also the people’s business. Some are affected more than others, particularly women and children. Our current reality is as follows.

“More people are forcibly displaced than ever before — over 65 million this year. Secondly, in 2016, 377 million people were affected by natural disasters. The number of forcibly displaced persons is on my mind as I have just returned from the stocktaking towards the global compact in Puerto Vallarta. The General Assembly has been tasked with coming up with a global compact for migration. That is not a task we take lightly. As we inch closer to our deadlines for agreement, let us remember that failure is not an option. Failure would be a blow to the United Nations, but it would also heap unspeakable suffering on human beings. Bearing in mind that unwavering focus on people, I will make two points today.

“First, we must protect those who are suffering and those who are helping them. The men and women sitting in this Hall today have a serious responsibility — we represent people in humanitarian crises. We are not here to use people as pawns for narrow political victories. To do so is

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to deny our common humanity. We are here to make sure that a girl can go to school without worrying that it will be bombed; that a patient can rest easy in the hospital knowing that it is safe; and that a young man can worship, no matter his religion, with peace of mind.

“Let us recognize that the weight of protecting people, especially the most vulnerable, rests on our shoulders. The great privilege of having a voice in such hallowed halls comes with a huge responsibility to our people. That protection extends also to those who suffer as a result of gender-based and sexual violence, which is on the rise. We must reaffirm our zero-tolerance policy for acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. Humanitarian actors must respect the principles of independence, impartiality, neutrality and humanity. All parties must allow humanitarian access to those in need. Lives are at stake. Furthermore, we must condemn the targeting of humanitarian and medical personnel.

“Secondly, we must prevent and mitigate conflicts and natural disasters. We have the tools and knowledge to do that. We know that a large driver of humanitarian crises is armed conflict. Thus, preventing and resolving conflict is our first line of defence against conflict-induced crises. We must address vulnerability and poverty — all root causes of immense human suffering. We have many plans to help us do that, namely, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the New Urban Agenda, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“We must uphold international humanitarian law and human rights law. That includes condemning all violations of international law and bringing perpetrators to justice. To prevent the catastrophic consequences of natural disasters on people, we need disaster risk reduction strategies, including early warning systems. We have what it takes to prevent people from suffering. We must include all stakeholders, including young people, in solving humanitarian crises. Let us use all of our knowledge and tools for prevention. That is better than a cure.

“In conclusion, let us recommit to taking action in accordance with our plans and today’s

resolutions. Let us also remember that our master plan, the Charter of the United Nations, gives us the responsibility to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, uphold human rights, maintain international law and promote better standards of life for all.

“Despite all of the bad news, humanitarian action is saving lives and funding is going up. However, there was still a 43 per cent gap in humanitarian funding last year. In that vein, I welcome the pledges made this morning at the Central Emergency Response Fund pledging conference. Let us continue in that quest together.”

I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia to introduce draft resolutions A/72/L.22 and A/72/L.25.

Ms. Lind (Estonia): At the outset, let me express our solidarity with all those affected by the outrageous attack against United Nations peacekeepers yesterday.

Let me now turn to introducing, on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States, draft resolution A/72/L.22, entitled “Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel”.

We are all well aware of the complexity of the current humanitarian landscape. The sheer numbers and magnitude of humanitarian needs far outpace the available resources, and crises are increasingly protracted. Risk is on the rise, while its nature is more unpredictable. That grave new reality does not spare United Nations workers, humanitarian personnel, medical personnel, or humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties. The noble purpose of their mission no longer protects them.

Last year, we witnessed an increase in direct attacks against United Nations premises. Although improved performance of the United Nations security management system led to a decrease in casualties, the trend is nevertheless worrisome. That is an acute reminder that security must remain a priority for all of us if we want the people on the ground, who put their lives at risk, to be able to deliver on their noble mission and service for the common good.

The level of accountability remains alarmingly low, thereby contributing to the sense of impunity and to the repetition of heinous actions. International and national laws provide a solid framework for the safety and security of United Nations and humanitarian

personnel, but accountability lags behind. We have a collective responsibility to protect United Nations and humanitarian personnel, and hold accountable those who put their security at risk.

In this year's draft resolution, we continue to recognize the diverse and multifaceted threats and various kinds of exposure that female and male humanitarian personnel, including the staff of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), medical services and United Nations and affiliated organizations, face in the overall deteriorating global security environment, and we commend their courage for continuing to operate in such environments. For that reason, we stress the importance of ensuring that the security and safety of humanitarian and United Nations personnel be consistently and integrally considered in planning for humanitarian action.

In the draft resolution, we also encourage and support all efforts to build and strengthen partnerships and information-sharing with NGOs. The vital role of NGOs in delivering humanitarian assistance has to be supported. Initiatives such as the revised Saving Lives Together framework need to be strengthened. We need to better understand threats through enhanced data collection so as to have a comprehensive picture of the situation faced by non-governmental organizations. The vulnerability of locally recruited personnel is further underlined. Moreover, we express concern about the increase in sexual assaults. We also recall the obligation to respect and protect medical personnel.

Last but not least, through this year's draft resolution, we encourage and express appreciation for continued improvements to the United Nations security management system, such as the victims of violence registry, and the United Nations system's road-safety strategy and programme criticality framework. We commend the work of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (DSS), under the guidance of Under-Secretary-General Peter Drennan, and welcome the work aimed at integrating all security personnel of the Secretariat under his leadership. The draft resolution reiterates the strong mandate and further guidance from the General Assembly for the essential work performed by the DSS and the United Nations security management system more broadly.

The EU and its member States firmly believe that it is our duty to acknowledge the commitment of humanitarians and the United Nations and associated

personnel to support their work and do everything in our power to further enhance their safety and security. I wish to warmly thank the many delegations that took part in consultations, particularly those that sponsored the draft resolution, for their constructive engagement so as to agree a text that demonstrates our shared concern about the safety and security of humanitarian and United Nations personnel. I would also like to thank the valuable support of the Department of Safety and Security and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which informed our discussions. The draft resolution has been and should remain genuinely consensual as a testimony to our shared humanity. We owe that to the people risking their own lives on a daily basis in order to save the lives of others. They need the collective, unequivocal and unqualified support of the entire General Assembly.

I now turn to introducing to this year's draft resolution A/72/L.25 on assistance to the Palestinian people. The EU remains gravely concerned about the difficult living conditions and humanitarian situation affecting the Palestinian people, in particular women and children, throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, including in Area C, and in particular in the Gaza strip.

In Gaza, an already dire humanitarian situation has worsened over the past several months. A key priority is to immediately improve the dire situation of the people in Gaza. It requires, including without limitation, the end of the closure and a full opening of crossing points, while addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. The EU welcomes the agreement signed in Cairo on 12 October, and the continuing engagement of Egypt. If fully implemented, that agreement could become an important step towards achieving the goal of Palestinian unity under a single, legitimate and democratic Palestinian national Authority, based on the Palestinian Liberation Organization's platform and Quartet principles in accordance with existing agreements.

The EU is determined to maintain its assistance in responding to the needs of the Palestinian people, including those of Palestinian refugees. Most recently, the EU made an additional emergency contribution to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to help it compensate for its shortfall.

Although we acknowledge that this draft resolution will need to be updated in the near future, we would

like to thank all parties and the rest of the membership for joining the consensus once again this year, and for rallying behind the principles and objectives outlined in it.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Ecuador to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.23.

Ms. Moreno González (Ecuador): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I have the distinct honour to introduce to the General Assembly the draft resolution entitled “International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development”, as contained in document A/72/L.23.

As we introduce the draft resolution again this year, the Group of 77 and China continue to reaffirm the importance of international cooperation in providing assistance to countries and peoples affected by natural disasters, in accordance with resolution 46/182 and the guiding principles for the strengthening of the coordination of the emergency humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations system, while also recognizing that the States affected have the primary responsibility for the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within their territories.

This year’s draft resolution recognizes the increase in the number and scale of natural disasters, including those related to the adverse effects of climate change. In that regard, the draft resolution encourages States Members of the United Nations and other relevant organizations and stakeholders to further strengthen efforts aimed at addressing the needs of persons displaced within the context of disasters, including those induced by climate change. It further notes the importance of sharing best practices to prevent and prepare for such displacement in that regard.

It also places particular emphasis on disaster prevention and mitigation, as well as preparedness and early-warning systems, hence its call for improving responses to early-warning information so as to ensure that early warning leads to an early action that can be implemented effectively in a timely manner. It also urges Member States and humanitarian and development organizations to continue to support early-warning action efforts, including through case-based financing at all levels.

Furthermore, this year’s draft resolution encourages Member States and other relevant stakeholders to continue to support the localization of disaster preparedness and response, with the objective of ensuring that national and local actors are able to respond to community-level needs and priorities. It also encourages Member States, international financial institutions and the private sector to mobilize predictable and multi-year support so as to work collectively towards achieving common results in order to reduce need, risk and vulnerability, while making use of a wide range of financial flows and instruments and partnerships to mobilize additional resources in the area of natural disasters.

Concerning data collection, the draft resolution encourages the United Nations to continue to strengthen its provision of data services and policy advice and to build the data skills of its humanitarian staff in order to improve the effectiveness of disaster preparedness and response. It also encourages Member States, with support from the United Nations, to establish and strengthen national disaster-loss databases, risk profiles and available capacities and to continue to collect, share and use such data to inform relevant policies and strategies.

Finally, the draft resolution encourages Member States, the United Nations humanitarian and development organizations and other relevant stakeholders to continue to take concrete action for the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda in order to strengthen resilience to disasters and the adverse effect of climate change and ensure that sustainable development in urban settings is informed by disaster risk.

In closing, the Group of 77 and China thanks the Permanent Mission of Morocco for successfully coordinating the negotiations of the draft resolution. We also appreciate the constructive spirit and the invaluable support shown by all Member States in order to arrive at this final text. It is our hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus once again at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. We thank Member States that have shown support for the draft resolution through co-sponsorship and invite others to do so as well.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.24.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): It is my great honour to deliver a joint statement on behalf of India and Sweden under the agenda item on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations.

The partnership between India and Sweden and our joint statement here today is a reflection of our shared and profound commitment to a strong international humanitarian response system. We also share a determination to work together as global champions in support of an effective humanitarian response. The number of those in need of humanitarian assistance is at its highest level since the end of the Second World War. Several protracted crises across the world are worsening. Climate-induced emergencies and natural disasters, sometimes combined with violent conflict, continue to wreak havoc on vulnerable communities.

The global humanitarian system reaches tens of millions of people every year and saves millions of lives. It is an effective and responsive system staffed by dedicated and professional individuals, yet today's unprecedented needs require an unprecedented response, both in quantity and in quality. In addition, stronger partnerships for humanitarian action will be needed. India's and Sweden's joint statement here today shows that common values and a shared commitment to humanitarian assistance can transcend geographical distance. We encourage all Member States to join us in this endeavour by building similar partnerships.

We, India and Sweden, reaffirm that humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law provide the basis for humanitarian assistance. The essence of resolution 46/182 is the call for collective efforts on the part of the international community and the United Nations in responding to humanitarian crises. We are committed to preserving and strengthening respect for and adherence to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. We also emphasize that the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States must be fully respected during humanitarian action, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The primary responsibility for providing protection and humanitarian assistance in a crisis always lies with the affected State.

More humanitarian workers are being targeted in violent attacks than ever before. We strongly condemn all attacks directed against personnel involved in humanitarian or peacekeeping missions. Such attacks

are not just attacks on the United Nations, but attacks on humanity itself. We reaffirm the need to end impunity for such acts. We welcome draft resolution A/72/L.22, entitled "Safety and Security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel", which will be adopted later today.

Affected populations should be at the centre of all humanitarian action. We encourage the humanitarian community and the whole United Nations system to continue to enhance their accountability to, and work closely with, those affected by humanitarian crises and disasters in order to ensure an inclusive process and to promote local ownership. In the light of the growing number of protracted crises, closer collaboration between the development and humanitarian agencies of the United Nations is critical. Development actors must engage earlier and more robustly in humanitarian contexts and fragile States. In turn, humanitarian agencies must become better at involving development and national actors early on in planning and analysis. We all need to work better together.

India and Sweden believe that humanitarian assistance is not only a moral obligation but also essential to the maintenance of international peace and security. As the world witnesses an unprecedented number of forcibly displaced people, increased migration flows, growing extremism and political instability, we must ask ourselves not only what the cost of humanitarian action is, but what the cost of inaction will be.

We all have a common responsibility to respond to humanitarian crises, wherever they may arise. We can all contribute in some way, be it through monetary core contributions to humanitarian agencies or through political support for humanitarian access. Every contribution matters. We must recognize that humanitarian crises become acute and unmanageable in contexts of poverty and underdevelopment. In those contexts, the capacity to respond to and manage crises is limited, as is the ability to rebuild afterwards. Therefore, while adequate funding for humanitarian response remains a significant challenge, we must not lose sight of the need for longer-term investment in development and resilience. In time, those investments will also reduce the need for large-scale humanitarian responses.

India was among the first countries to make emergency aid available to the countries worst affected by the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean region. India undertook an evacuation from Saint Maarten

of the nationals of 10 countries. Through the India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund at the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, India has provided \$2.2 million for relief efforts in the Caribbean Community.

Sweden not only provides significant targeted support to most of the world's major humanitarian crises; we are also one of the single largest donors of core funding to United Nations humanitarian agencies. Flexible funding, such as core and pooled funding, allows for timely, independent, effective and efficient humanitarian action.

In a world marked by dramatically increasing humanitarian needs, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has proved to be one of the most effective ways to provide time-critical assistance and protection to millions of people. That is why India and Sweden are proud to be long-standing donors to the CERF. We encourage all Member States with the means to do so to contribute to the CERF in order to achieve an annual funding level of \$1 billion by 2018. Sweden and India are also partners in the Dialogue on Humanitarian Partnership (DHP). The DHP, co-chaired by Sweden and Brazil, brings together 24 engaged Member States to informally discuss key humanitarian issues here in New York.

In closing, we call upon all Member States to build partnerships and to do what they can, politically and financially, to ensure that today's unprecedented needs are met with unprecedented solidarity and an unprecedented humanitarian response.

I would also like to make a statement now in my national capacity.

It is my great pleasure to introduce to the General Assembly, on behalf of all the sponsors, draft resolution A/72/L.24, on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations — the so-called humanitarian omnibus resolution.

This year marks the twenty-sixth anniversary of the landmark resolution 46/182, which created the basic framework upon which our humanitarian system is built. Sweden has facilitated the negotiations on the text of the resolution ever since. Today, against the backdrop of an unprecedented number of global humanitarian crises, we should remember that the goal of our efforts remains the same as on that day in December 1991, 26

years ago, when the resolution was first adopted in the General Assembly — to effectively come to the aid of our fellow women and men affected by crisis. The stakes have never been higher for millions of those women and men across the world. That is why the concept of consensus and collaborative approach in humanitarian affairs, above and beyond national interests, are so critical. That is also the spirit that guides our work as the proud facilitators of the annual resolution and, more broadly, as a global humanitarian partner.

The annual adoption by the General Assembly of the humanitarian omnibus resolution reaffirms the unique leadership role of the United Nations in coordinating and responding to global humanitarian needs. Its adoption by consensus sends an important message about our collective commitment to a humanitarian response and to upholding international humanitarian law. This year's draft resolution has a number of significant improvements, reinforcements and adaptations to reflect the humanitarian reality of today. The end result is an improved policy platform for global humanitarian action and assistance. Let me mention three significant areas of development.

First, in 2016 global hunger rose for the first time in over a decade. That is simply unacceptable in a world that produces enough food for everyone. This year's draft resolution puts additional focus on the alarming food security situation for millions of people, the risk of famine and the factors driving those crises, including conflict.

Secondly, schools and hospitals should be safe spaces for those who use them and those who staff them. We have further strengthened the language on the protection of schools and the need to safeguard safe and protective school environments in humanitarian emergencies. We have also significantly strengthened the language on the safety and security of medical personnel and health care in armed conflict.

Thirdly, this year's draft resolution provides a stronger platform for humanitarian reform and humanitarian financing, highlighting the responsibilities of donors and humanitarian actors alike and the importance of modalities such as the humanitarian country-based pooled funds in delivering life-saving assistance to those in need.

This year's draft resolution also reflects the interdependency and criticality of partnership among different aspects of humanitarian assistance

and the importance of the nexus between shorter-term humanitarian efforts, longer-term investments in sustainable development, and our common responsibility to sustain peace. Through those and other improvements, we have taken a collective step towards a stronger, more effective and more inclusive humanitarian response system. We now count on the United Nations and its Member States to implement those important changes.

I am pleased and, indeed, gratified to once again be able to report a significant increase in the number of sponsors for the draft resolution. At 98 sponsors, we are now at an all-time high, with strong cross-regional support for the important issues and objectives that we outline in the omnibus draft resolution. I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank and congratulate delegations for their active and constructive engagement on this year's draft resolution and for supporting it through their sponsorship. We look forward to the formal adoption of the draft resolution by consensus later on during this session.

The strengthened draft resolution that I am proud to introduce here today is the result of the common dedication of many active Member States, small and large; of countries providing humanitarian assistance and of those receiving it; of countries prone to disasters and of those with lessons on how to avoid them; countries that have suffered armed conflict that has forced parts of their population to flee, and countries generously hosting those in need of protection. Such broad and diverse ownership demonstrates the truly global nature of humanitarian solidarity. It is through our collective action and continued support for that work that we will succeed in improving the global humanitarian system and ultimately provide relief to those who need it the most.

Ms. Md Jaini (Brunei Darussalam): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

At the outset, we take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the men and women who have risked their lives to serve the United Nations. It was therefore with a heavy heart that we learned of last night's heinous attack, and we express our deepest condolences to the Governments and peoples of Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as to the United Nations family.

We commend the work of the United Nations system, in particular that of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in coordinating essential humanitarian and disaster relief assistance, often in the most challenging situations. We also thank the Secretary-General for his reports under this agenda item.

This year, we have witnessed some of the worst disasters as a result of extreme weather events, with devastating human and economic losses. Living in one of the world's most disaster-prone regions, we in South-East Asia are acutely aware of the challenges posed by such disasters. In addition to its high-risk and high-level exposure to disasters, ASEAN is also highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Building disaster-resilient nations and safer communities is therefore a key component of our overall vision for a people-oriented and people-centred ASEAN. In that regard, allow me to briefly share, in two broad strokes, what we are doing regionally to better prepare ourselves to deal with disasters and contribute to international efforts.

First, we are ensuring the implementation and coherence of intra-ASEAN policy frameworks, strategies and approaches. The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response serves as the regional policy backbone, covering the whole spectrum of disaster management from risk assessment, prevention and mitigation, preparedness, emergency response and recovery to technical cooperation and scientific research. The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management was created to operationalize the Agreement. It is our primary regional coordination agency on disaster management and emergency response. In recent months, the Centre has delivered relief items for the affected communities in Rakhine state in Myanmar, northern Viet Nam and Marawi city in the Philippines.

At the same time, we continue to actively improve our capacity for disaster risk management by, among other things, investing in joint preparedness and disaster-relief exercises, institutionalizing resilience by engaging peoples and communities, and strengthening the regional knowledge and innovation exchange base. Last year, our leaders signed the Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region, which seeks to respond faster, mobilize greater resources and establish a stronger coordination of ASEAN's

collective response to disasters. We also recognize that the ASEAN Coordinating Centre could play a role at a later stage in enabling ASEAN to respond to disasters outside the region, where appropriate, in partnership with regional and international agencies.

Secondly, ASEAN is strengthening its collaborative partnerships through several ASEAN-led processes, such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting, the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Regional Forum. We are also fully committed to enhancing cooperation with the United Nations in that field. The annual ASEAN strategic dialogue on disaster management, held this year in August in Singapore, centred on the collaboration between ASEAN and the United Nations in disaster management. That was further reaffirmed at the ninth ASEAN-United Nations summit, recently held in Manila, where both sides agreed to work together to reinforce ASEAN resiliency to natural disasters and climate change within the framework of the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations (2016-2020).

In addition, the exchange of interoperability of briefs on cooperation between the ASEAN Secretary-General, as the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator, and the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator marks a significant step forward in translating our shared commitments into concrete action on emergency response.

In closing, ASEAN reaffirms its commitment to engaging with other Member States and regional and global partners to improve the international response to natural disasters, with a view to ultimately saving lives and alleviating human suffering.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vale de Almeida (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 28 States members of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Twenty-six years ago, on 19 December 1991, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/182. That pivotal resolution marked the collective commitment of the international community to helping to alleviate human suffering and helping the world's most vulnerable people in their greatest moments of need. Since then, hundreds of millions of people who have experienced the horrors of violent conflict and natural disasters have received life-saving assistance. That is a poignant reminder every year as we negotiate and adopt the annual package of humanitarian resolutions. Now is the moment to be frank and to spare no effort in addressing the reality and humanitarian challenges on the ground. Now is the moment to ensure that humanitarian workers have the necessary support and tools in fulfilling their honourable mission.

The tasks facing the humanitarian community have never been more daunting. The challenges today are not only enormous in scope, but also very different from those of 26 years ago, when our predecessors first adopted the resolution. The number and magnitude of humanitarian crises have grown exponentially. The *Global Humanitarian Overview 2018*, recently launched in Geneva by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, estimates that 136 million people around the world will need humanitarian assistance in 2018. Some \$22.5 billion are required to meet the needs of 90 million people.

At the same time, many humanitarian crises have become so protracted that they seem permanent. Nineteen of the 21 humanitarian response plans presented by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are for humanitarian crises that have been ongoing for five years or more. Three of those crises have required humanitarian plans and appeals each year for at least 18 consecutive years.

Funding for humanitarian response has continued to increase in 2017. However, the growth in needs has outpaced the increase in funding. Donors have provided record levels of funding to humanitarian response plans 2017 — nearly \$13 billion by the end of November, with humanitarian agencies reaching more people in need than ever before, with tens of millions of them saving millions of lives. Nonetheless, never before has generosity been so insufficient. The funding gap for humanitarian action amounts today to an estimated \$12 billion.

The long-running mismatch between needs and resources is critical, but it is only one part of the equation. More importantly, the underlying issues have not gone away. Whole countries, even regions, across the globe are stuck in the vicious cycle of protracted crises and fragility. The increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, environmental degradation and the consequences of climate change, amplified by spiralling conflicts, cause unprecedented human suffering, death, the destruction of livelihoods, infrastructure and ecosystems, and food insecurity.

At the same time, we have to be realistic and acknowledge that conflicts are the main drivers of humanitarian needs. All but two of the 2018 humanitarian response plans are for situations that involve a major element of conflict. In addition to the tragic human cost of violence, conflicts often lead to people fleeing their homes. More than 65 million people have been forcibly displaced, either across borders or, in the majority of cases, internally as they flee violence or persecution. Half of the displaced are children. Forced displacement is a grim reality, now lasting on average 17 years.

Conflicts are increasingly a leading cause of hunger, undermining food security in multiple ways and creating access problems for Governments and humanitarian agencies, which often struggle to reach those most in need. As a direct consequence, the world is suffering one of its largest humanitarian crises, with millions of people facing the threat of starvation and famine. Furthermore, we have witnessed how international humanitarian law is increasingly disregarded by parties to conflicts. Hospitals are being attacked. Patients, doctors, nurses and humanitarian workers are being targeted and often killed. Civilians are being trapped in sieges. Constant care is not being taken to protect the civilian population. Thus, the consequences are beyond devastating. The already vulnerable are hit first and they are hit the hardest and for a longer time.

This is the reality that we need to address today. The European Union and its member States are committed to assuming our part of the shared responsibility of the international community to save lives, alleviate suffering and preserve human dignity. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and is therefore a timely opportunity to validate the commitment of the EU family to remaining at the forefront of the international humanitarian response. As global citizens

we are devoting substantive resources and attention to engaging inside Europe and Europe's neighbourhoods and responding to emergencies across the globe.

Principled humanitarian action will remain at the core of our response, whether in case of natural disasters or man-made crises. We remain strongly committed to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. We will persevere in our efforts to ensure that respect for international humanitarian law, refugee law and international human rights law — including safeguarding full, unconditional, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access — remains at the top of the international agenda. Where serious violations of international humanitarian law take place, accountability is of the greatest importance. Full, prompt, impartial and effective investigations are needed, including through the use of the International Criminal Court as a court of last resort.

Protecting civilians and aid workers associated with the United Nations, the Red Cross Movement or non-governmental organizations, whether internationally or locally recruited, is today more than ever before a priority. In parallel, achieving greater efficiencies in the delivery of humanitarian aid has no alternative. We will continue to support anticipatory humanitarian assistance that enables preparedness action before disasters strike. Furthermore, we will continue our efforts to make our response more effective and more accountable to the people it aims to serve.

The European Union and its member States reiterate their continued commitment to putting people at the centre of their humanitarian action. Women, children, older persons and people with disabilities are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of disasters and conflicts. Humanitarian operations must take into account their specific needs and capacities and involve them throughout the response cycle.

We must learn the lessons from past crises and pave the way for more sustainable responses. The recurrent and protracted nature of crises underscores the need for coherence and cooperation between humanitarian and development actors, in accordance with their respective mandates, towards common results with the aim to reduce need and vulnerability over multiple years. We should not forget that humanitarian aid can never be the only solution to a crisis. We urge the international community to work on political solutions to put an end

to ongoing conflicts, which is the only way to put an end to the human suffering that follows in their wake.

In conclusion, the challenges facing the humanitarian community today are enormous. As the General Assembly, we need to contribute to their work through the draft resolutions we are adopting today by further strengthening the agreed framework for humanitarian action in the successor resolution to 46/182, introduced and skilfully facilitated by one of our member States, Sweden; by recalling strongly the need to ensure the safety and security of humanitarians and United Nations personnel, through the draft resolution introduced on the joint behalf of the 28 States members of the European Union; by better addressing the consequences of natural disasters, through the draft resolution introduced by the Group of 77 and China, and ably facilitated by Morocco. I say, well done to all of them.

The European Union and its member States remain collectively the world's largest humanitarian donor. The objective of our humanitarian aid is to save lives and alleviate suffering, wherever it is found. We shall continue doing our part in a principled manner. It is our collective and shared responsibility.

Mr. Hassan (Maldives): We are faced with a world today where humankind is under constant threat from wars and disasters like never before. We are reminded of that every day by the pleas of people from war-torn countries who want a better tomorrow. And we were reminded of how any one of us could end up in such dire situations when three major hurricanes swept across the Caribbean, just before the current session of the General Assembly started this year.

My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the reports under this agenda item, which paint an alarming but accurate picture of today's reality that small island developing States (SIDS) such as the Maldives suffer disproportionate impacts from disasters. The reports also highlight how Asia and the Pacific is the world's most disaster-prone region. This, coupled with our limited resources, infrastructure and unique geography, places SIDS in a more vulnerable situation.

Through recent history, numerous humanitarian crises have emerged in SIDS due to natural disasters. From the Indian Ocean tsunami to Cyclones Pam and Winston, and Hurricanes Irma, Jose and Katia, we, the SIDS, have witnessed utter devastation and the loss of lives on our islands. The survivors are entirely reliant

on the United Nations system and the generosity of the international community to piece together their lives and return to a semblance of normal existence.

My delegation wishes to focus on two main aspects of how relief assistance from the United Nations has improved in the context of SIDS — in the mobilization of resources and in the actual attainment of resources.

The United Nations system needs to be structured in a manner that adequately caters not only to the humanitarian situations which already exist, but also ones that may emerge, especially following disasters in uniquely vulnerable countries such as SIDS. We all recognize that responses must be tailored to needs, and this must be done strategically through an analysis of needs, in close consultation with the affected countries and communities, guided by the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. Disaggregated data must be used for more effective and informed responses, and those responses need to be constantly re-evaluated based on the most recent information available.

In the case of SIDS, acquiring that information and data can be a challenge owing to inherent structural and resource constraints. On small islands, there are normally limited points of entry, which may face structural damage — obstructing access to humanitarian aid. That often delays mobilization of aid until the necessary transportation resources are made available from donors or other countries. The Maldives faced that reality following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, as did a number of SIDS in the aftermath of the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean.

Through strategic planning in disaster-prone areas, it could be beneficial to establish pre-existing systems that can immediately mobilize aid in those circumstances, through cooperation with Member States which are within close geographical proximity. We commend the work carried out by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and encourage Member States to work more closely with OCHA to explore ways in which humanitarian aid can be delivered more efficiently in emergency situations in disaster-prone areas.

We also appreciate the role of the Central Emergency Response Fund in rapidly responding to sudden-onset emergencies, and guiding resources to where they are most required, including the \$10 million allocated for humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma this year.

We also emphasize the need to generate more sustainable funding to specifically address the humanitarian crises faced by SIDS. We take this opportunity to once again reiterate the call to enhance efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change, which are the root causes of these disasters.

We note the achievements in pooled funds by OCHA in facilitating assistance to those in need. We also note that the United Nations system does not provide a long-term solution for the humanitarian crises faced by SIDS following disasters. Although humanitarian situations have been alleviated, they have not been resolved. As a result, our economic growth and sustainable development is sidelined, due to our limited resources being redirected to finding a solution.

The cyclones, the hurricanes and the storms that have devastated lives and livelihoods in the Caribbean and in the Indian Ocean in recent days are no longer natural disasters. To treat those disasters as natural phenomena ignores the human-induced changes to the climate patterns that have given rise to such disasters. Preventing and responding to such disasters, including reducing risks, require political and diplomatic solutions. My delegation wishes to emphasize the importance of bringing a gradual shift to our thinking from managing humanitarian situations caused by disasters to preventing them through addressing the conditions that caused them in the first place. Through the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, we have set out an ambitious plan to steer us away from human suffering.

Ms. Fisher-tsin (Israel): Humanitarian crises today devastate entire populations and bring the development of nations to a halt. The longer crises persist, the harder it is for nations to regain the momentum needed to pursue sustainable development. Conflicts, natural disasters, disease outbreaks and drought continue to jeopardize the lives of more than 100 million people worldwide. Today more than 164 million people in 47 countries are in need of international humanitarian assistance. These are not just numbers, they are the problems of real people, with real families and real lives, and their daily lack of access to basic human needs. Humanitarian crises are not bound by borders and can also affect developed nations in all regions of the world. As Members of the United Nations, it is our moral obligation to ensure that no one is left behind. It is our responsibility as a community of nations to

act when our neighbours face disasters. We must never turn a blind eye to innocents in need and simply cannot allow politics to stand in our way.

Israel is committed to providing humanitarian aid to people around the world, near and far. Our belief in *tikkun olam* — repairing the world — drives us to alleviate the conditions of those who have no control over their circumstances.

The ongoing conflict in Syria has left millions of civilians in need of urgent humanitarian aid. The scope of devastation is so immense that we cannot let our call to action be diluted by political agendas or disputes. Nothing can remove our moral obligation to help. Israel's Western Galilee Hospital, in Nahariya, has treated thousands of Syrians over the years. Doctors and nurses are committed to improving patients' physical and mental health, and restoring their sense of humanity.

When it comes to saving lives, Israel knows no borders. From Syria to Sierra Leone, from Mexico to Puerto Rico, from man-made conflicts to natural disasters, Israel never wavers in its commitment to helping others. Just three months ago Mexico was hit by two devastating earthquakes. Immediately after the first earthquake, a team from Israel joined by Mashav, Israel's agency for international development cooperation, arrived with 15 tons of essential equipment. Just 40 hours after the second earthquake, a team of 70 Israelis, including engineers, joined hands with the Government of Mexico and together began a crucial rescue operation.

Addressing today's complex humanitarian challenges requires a multi-stakeholder approach. Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector must work together — all hands on deck — to provide life-saving disaster relief and long-term support. IsraAID, a non-profit non-governmental organization, focuses on disaster relief and long-term support. Since its establishment, in 2001, it has been on the ground in nearly every major humanitarian crisis — providing medics, doctors, search and rescue teams and post-trauma experts.

Israel greatly appreciates the continuous support of United Nations agencies, Member States and NGOs that dedicate their time and resources to those in need. Their efforts serve millions worldwide in their darkest times, thereby reinforcing the founding principles of the United Nations. Through humanitarian aid, we send

a powerful message to the 100 million people who need it to survive. We tell them that we are here. We tell them that they are not alone.

Mr. Al-Hamadi (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, we thank the President of the General Assembly for having devoted this meeting to the consideration of the item on strengthening the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations in order to shed light on efforts to coordinate humanitarian response.

The United Nations attaches great importance to humanitarian and emergency assistance, given the number of crises and conflicts and the number of displaced persons, refugees and disasters. Such crises and disasters have brought about great suffering, given the new displacements and the large number of persons requiring humanitarian assistance, which burdens the United Nations and all of its partners in facing humanitarian challenges such as development and the coordination of humanitarian assistance.

Qatar is greatly concerned about the Secretary-General's report (A/72/490), which mentions enormous levels of food insecurity and forced displacements. More than 65 million have been forced to flee because of violence or discrimination. Millions have been displaced as a result of natural disasters. We are also worried about what the Secretary-General's report (A/72/87) states about assistance to the Palestinian people and the economic and social impact of the Israeli occupation on the lives of the Palestinian people. We emphasize the need for an appropriate response to meet the humanitarian needs of the occupied Palestinian people.

Qatar appreciates all of the efforts aimed at providing humanitarian assistance and assistance for development. We underscore the importance of the key role played by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) for rapid and effective assistance in order to save lives. We would highlight Qatar's role in support of the Fund. Qatar's foreign policy is based on cooperation and partnership in facing common challenges. Qatar therefore continues to be an active country in the area of international peace and security through its diplomatic efforts at the regional and international levels and through its role in the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

Based on those responsibilities, we are strengthening our regional and international partnerships for humanitarian response in order to promote development

and to consolidate international peace and security through a variety of humanitarian and development assistance initiatives aimed at meeting the challenges posed by economic and humanitarian crises and natural disasters.

We are aware of the importance of our role in financing humanitarian assistance and have therefore extended \$40 million in assistance to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), thereby making us among the largest supporters of OCHA. Given the important role played by the CERF in providing emergency humanitarian assistance, the State of Qatar has continued to support the Fund by pledging \$5 million for five years. In addition, we have an agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that includes a \$6 million contribution to provide housing and undertake reconstruction efforts for displaced persons in Iraq's Nineveh governorate.

The State of Qatar reiterates its commitment to providing humanitarian assistance based on cooperation, partnership, integrity and impartiality, by means of the various efforts of the international community to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ms. Kanjanasoon (Thailand): The Kingdom of Thailand aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Humanitarian crises continue to be the most urgent challenge facing our world today. The scale and intensity of human suffering inflicted by wars, natural disasters and poverty looms larger than ever. We must come together to address this issue with a shared goal of bringing about concrete and timely changes for those who are in need.

As outlined in the reports (A/72/76, A/72/348 and A/72/358) of the Secretary-General under this agenda item, humanitarian needs escalated in the past year, with a shocking 65 million people worldwide displaced by conflict and violence, and approximately 70 million still in dire need of food assistance. Yet, despite our combined efforts, obstacles in providing humanitarian assistance still remain, such as limited access, risky working conditions and a lack of resources and supplies.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the men and women who have worked with dedication

as first responders to provide humanitarian relief, response and assistance on the ground. Their efforts have been commendable and certainly meaningful for those affected by humanitarian crises. In that connection, Thailand strongly believes that the safety and security of our medical personnel, humanitarian personnel and peacekeeping missions must also be a top priority. We would also like to express appreciation to the relevant agencies, in particular the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), for their commendable work in effectively facilitating countless humanitarian operations around the world.

Thailand places great importance on providing humanitarian assistance to countries affected by disasters. We have allocated a humanitarian assistance budget of roughly \$1 million per year, and, since 2012, have set aside a donation of \$20,000 per year for the Central Emergency Response Fund. We have also set up a coordinating committee to provide assistance to countries facing emergency situations due to natural disasters, specifically through the donation of funds and supplies, the dispatch of search and rescue units and the provision of medical personnel. We have also applied our home-grown approach — the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of His Majesty the Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej — to promote resilience, preparedness and people-centred response plans, while recognizing the need to enhance the role and engagement of the private sector in disaster risk reduction and in rebuilding communities.

At the regional level, Thailand stands ready to contribute to assistance initiatives within the region, including through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance, in accordance with the commitments made in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Bangkok principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework, as adopted last year, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, in order to ensure a more comprehensive approach to handling humanitarian situations.

Countries have taken steps to combat the growing humanitarian crises. However, considering the frequency and increasing intensity of extreme natural phenomena, it is perhaps time for us to engage in serious conversations on establishing long-term solutions to those crises through better risk assessment and preparedness. We must make sure the most vulnerable

areas have adequate prevention measures in place and resilient infrastructure.

In cases of humanitarian crises resulting from war and political turmoil, we must keep in mind that the end goal is not only to find political solutions to country-specific conflicts, but also to protect and save human lives. Thailand firmly believes in carrying out humanitarian operations on the basis of humanity and impartiality, while also fostering trust and cooperation with the relevant Governments. After all, the task for the United Nations — and for all of us here — is to save lives and to create better ones for people. The current global humanitarian crises is nothing short of a reflection of the tremendous challenge that still faces us. Only together can we bring about significant change.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that Thailand remains committed to working closely with the United Nations, Member States and relevant agencies in continuing to provide humanitarian assistance around the world.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to align myself with the statement delivered by the delegation of the European Union. However, I would like to make some additional, more informal, comments in my national capacity.

First, I would note that, unfortunately, for next year the news is not good, as 136 million persons are going to require humanitarian assistance. While that is already tragic news, it is even worse if we compare that figure with last year's, as 136 million represents a 4 per cent increase. That means that the mechanisms we have at the United Nations for prevention and humanitarian assistance are simply not working as they should despite all of the efforts that we, the 193 Member States, and the entire United Nations system are making. I would like to make three brief points.

What is the main reason for humanitarian crises? The answer, unfortunately, is conflicts — man's actions. And conflicts come about because of flagrant violations of international humanitarian law. We see attacks upon civilians and sexual violence in conflicts. We see absolutely everything. We also see attacks on schools and universities. That is why Spain, as a member of the Security Council over the past two years, promoted the initiative to adopt resolution 2286 (2016), which calls for ending attacks against medical facilities. Obviously, there is a high degree of impunity in all armed conflicts. Despite Security Council

resolutions, implementation is not what we would like. That is why we are promoting an initiative at the General Assembly to implement resolution 2286 (2016) and to ensure, as much as possible, that such attacks do not go unpunished.

My second comment has to do with the World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, which yielded a new agenda and a period of reflection. I should like in particular to draw attention to a very important matter. Unfortunately but understandably, Governments and States — including us — continue to pay greater attention to the humanitarian crises in the headlines of newspapers. We follow them with a great deal of attention. We mobilize resources. But I would draw the Assembly's attention to all the conflicts that have been forgotten, the so-called protracted conflicts, to which, unfortunately, we are not paying sufficient political or humanitarian attention. Those crises are not "humanitarian" crises, they are political ones that lead to major humanitarian disasters. That is why Spain unreservedly supports the Secretary-General's proposal to reform the Organization and the three main pillars so that they are perfectly well integrated.

Lastly, with regard to natural disasters and climate change, I believe that, over the past several years, it has been obvious that climate change is another major reason for natural disasters, which has led to the horrors in areas such as the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Sahel that are putatively a result of humankind's activities. We normally address such issues in the General Assembly, but I would like to state once again that my delegation also favours dealing with such issues related to climate change in the Security Council. Spain fulfilled its commitments in that regard as a member of the Security Council by participating in the adoption of several initiatives, about which I do not wish to speak at length now but which entailed taking a step in the right direction.

In conclusion, I should like to say that Spain will of course fulfil all its commitments and that one of our immediate challenges will be in our role as of Chair of the Donor Support Group of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for the year 2019-2020, in which, as always, we will strive to do the best job possible.

Mr. Won Doyeon (Republic of Korea): First of all, I would like to express our deep condolences to the

people of Tanzania and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their tragic loss.

The international community has reached more people in need this year than ever before, including providing record levels of funding for humanitarian response plans. Despite our collective and continued efforts, newly emerging humanitarian challenges, such as the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, as well as the risk of famine and natural disasters, have led to a deterioration in the overall humanitarian situation. One recent newspaper article caught my eyes. It stated that, owing to unusually cold weather in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, many refugee children are suffering from related diseases related to cold weather, such as pneumonia. Those children are directly exposed to that severe weather and become sick because they have to sleep in refugee tents without blankets. Man-made conflicts are having a devastating impact on the lives of those affected, and the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children and persons with disabilities, are suffering the most.

The international community has made tremendous efforts to cope with the unprecedented humanitarian crises that we are facing today. The United Nations system has consolidated its efforts in the fight against famine. Pre-emptive actions have saved the lives of many people who otherwise might have fallen victim to famine. The international community came together to respond to devastating natural disasters, such as Hurricanes Irma and Maria. We were also pleased to see that significant progress has been made in following up on the outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit. However, we all know that such efforts have not been sufficient. Deteriorating humanitarian situations in many parts of the world are leading us to rethink what we should do differently to find fundamental solutions to the challenges that we are facing today. I wish to take this opportunity to highlight my delegation's views in that regard.

First of all, we should be mindful of the interlinked challenges of environmental degradation, underdevelopment, persistent inequalities and violent extremism. Humanitarian crises can no longer be separated from development or peace and security challenges. Those interlinked and multi-dimensional challenges call for the United Nations system and its partners to work better together, with increased collaboration and coordination. Breaking down the silos

between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors should be an important part of discussions on United Nations reform. In that regard, we wish to call on the recently launched steering committee led by the Deputy Secretary-General to find concrete ways to promote better collaboration in the field beyond New York-based discussions.

Korea is committed to playing its part. The humanitarian-development-peace nexus was discussed in depth during the Asian conference on peacebuilding and conflict prevention held in Seoul from 6 to 7 November. The conference was co-hosted by the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the Korean Government. A deep-dive workshop on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus was also held a little more than two weeks ago in Seoul and hosted by the Seoul Policy Centre on Global Development Partnerships of the United Nations Development Programme, during which experts from various United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations exchanged very pragmatic ideas.

Secondly, making a real difference with regard to humanitarian actions can be achieved by improving the overall efficiency of the humanitarian system. The Policy Centre's new way of working initiative is providing important guidance for Member States and the relevant agencies to make the entire ecosystem robust. We are pleased to see that significant progress has been made in operationalizing the new way of working. Collective efforts through the new way of working can be achieved only if the funding architecture is aligned to allow for the necessary flexibility and predictability.

In that regard, we are pleased that the international community is paying increasing attention to the Central Emergency Response Fund and the country-based pooled funds managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs — although they are insufficient. This year Korea has not only almost doubled its humanitarian budget as compared to the previous year, but also has given priority to improving funding quality by significantly increasing its support to country-based pooled funds and unearmarked thematic humanitarian funds run by funds and programmes.

Thirdly, humanitarian assistance should prioritize life-saving activities for the most vulnerable people, including women, children and persons with disabilities. We cannot achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development without redoubling efforts to reach first those who might otherwise be left the furthest behind. We are particularly concerned about the increased risk of gender-based violence against women and girls in crises. Korea is prioritizing those vulnerable groups in its humanitarian policy and is carefully fulfilling its commitment to expand its support for them.

The current scale and magnitude of humanitarian crises urgently call for the solidarity of, and collective actions by, the international community. Close coordination and collaboration among the United Nations, all Member States and other partners are more critical than ever. The Republic of Korea reaffirms its firm commitment to being a part of that endeavour.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Humanitarian needs only continue to increase every year. The number of persons who have been forcibly displaced — because they had to flee either violence or disasters — has reached a record high. Civilians, as well as humanitarian workers, are frequently the targets of attacks. Gaining access to humanitarian and other types of assistance and protection for those in need is becoming increasingly difficult. Confronted with those realities, the international community must come up with a firm and unified response. The draft resolutions that we are discussing today must be reflected in the latter. I would like to stress the following three fundamental points.

First, in line with resolution 46/182, we reiterate that humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence so as to protect and assist people in need.

Secondly, international humanitarian law is the universally accepted legal framework for the protection of all victims of armed conflict and the provision of humanitarian assistance. It is essential that that legal framework be respected by all parties to a conflict. The challenges that require a common response are significant. Access to people in need must be ensured. The protection of those who risk their lives to care for the injured and the sick must be strengthened. In the light of the number of armed conflicts where the rules of international humanitarian law are regularly flouted and of the increasing number of attacks on hospitals and schools, it is our duty to strengthen protection for all victims of armed conflict and medical personnel, as the Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols

require us to do. The acts that we witness in some armed conflicts today cause indignation and weigh on our collective conscience. The perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian law must be prosecuted and brought to justice.

Thirdly, the phenomenon of forced displacement owing to natural disasters, climate change or armed conflict requires close coordination among the various humanitarian assistance and development mechanisms, as well as peacebuilding and human rights instruments. We need an approach that includes prevention, protection and resilience.

Given the immense humanitarian challenges that we are currently facing, the progress made this year in the context of today's draft resolutions is an encouraging sign. However, we note that the texts that we will adopt today still fall short of the requirements of the global humanitarian situation, particularly in terms of humanitarian access and the complementarity of humanitarian and development approaches. Beyond the draft resolutions, it is important to recall that the humanitarian needs that we face today would be drastically reduced if the parties to armed conflict respected their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Finally, my delegation wishes to express its deep gratitude to the representatives who facilitated the various draft resolutions. The facilitators made every effort to reach decisions by consensus, which is a testament to the unity of States in the face of humanitarian needs.

Ms. Luo Jin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The current international humanitarian situation remains grave, with a persistently high demand for humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian workers have worked tirelessly, thereby contributing to the humanitarian response. The international community should uphold the concept of a community of a shared future for humankind, foster consensus, be united, engage in cooperation and address both the symptoms and the root causes in our common effort to respond to the increasingly grave humanitarian situation. In that connection, China wishes to emphasize the following points.

First, it is necessary to respect international law and the basic norms governing international relations in order to carry out humanitarian work effectively. A timely response to the priority needs of recipient countries and respect for their leadership ensure

effective humanitarian relief by the international community. International humanitarian assistance should be provided in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and resolution 46/182, and must respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of recipient countries and adhere to the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. It must comply with international law and the laws of the host country, avoid politicizing humanitarian issues and uphold the non-military nature of humanitarian relief. Parties to armed conflicts must observe international humanitarian law, fulfil their obligation to protect civilians, as well as medical personnel and facilities, and ensure humanitarian access.

Secondly, it is necessary to promote development and to maintain peace so as to fundamentally reduce the demand for humanitarian relief. Recent years have witnessed numerous humanitarian crises caused by armed conflict, while poverty is a major root cause of turmoil and conflict. While effectively meeting short-term humanitarian demands, the international community needs to invest more in development and to comprehensively advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to address the root causes of conflicts. There is a need to vigorously help developing countries to eradicate poverty, improve people's livelihoods and increase their capacity for self-development so as to achieve common development and promote lasting peace. We call on developed countries to effectively fulfil their commitments with regard to official development assistance and to refrain from reducing resources for development, while increasing humanitarian resources.

Thirdly, it is necessary to strengthen capacity-building in developing countries in order for them to deal with natural disasters effectively. Over the past year, natural disasters such as hurricanes, droughts, floods and earthquakes have caused significant property losses and human casualties, and climate change further exacerbated the adverse effects of disasters. Developing countries are constrained by inadequate disaster-relief capacity and resources. The international community should increase financial and technical assistance to affected countries, in line with their national conditions and specific needs, so as to enhance their capacity for risk management and their resilience. It should assist affected countries with infrastructure construction in order to provide a solid basis for the transition from disaster relief to development.

Fourthly, it is necessary to work together and to support the United Nations in its leading role in humanitarian relief work. Member States should actively support United Nations humanitarian relief efforts. In line with its mandate, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs should improve its efficiency and play an important role in coordinating international humanitarian assistance, establish and improve cooperative partnerships led by Member States and promote synergy in humanitarian assistance at the national, regional and international levels based on the actual needs and priorities identified by the recipient Government and peoples.

China attaches great importance to, and participates actively in, international humanitarian assistance. In recent years, we have provided large amounts of emergency humanitarian aid to dozens of countries. In 2017, the Chinese Government promptly supplied emergency disaster relief in cash and in kind to help Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen and other countries to deal with famine; Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda and Cuba to respond to hurricanes in the Caribbean region; and Mexico, Iran and Iraq to cope with earthquakes. We have therefore provided strong support to those countries stricken by disasters in their effort to mitigate the impact of those disasters and to rebuild homes as soon as possible.

The Chinese Government stands ready to work with the rest of the international community to continue to provide various forms of assistance, to the extent possible, to countries affected by disasters, to take an active part in bilateral and multilateral humanitarian activities, to further deepen international cooperation and exchange in order to enhance the collective capacity for disaster prevention, mitigation and relief, and to contribute further to the international humanitarian cause.

With the multiple challenges facing human society, peoples of all countries need to unite and work together to build a world of lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity that is open, inclusive, clean and beautiful.

Ms. Blais (Canada) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Canada would like to underscore the constructive climate of our exchanges over the past year and to thank the facilitators and delegations for the collegiality, flexibility and spirit of compromise that they showed during the negotiations. The draft texts to be adopted

send a clear message and are a testament to the grave humanitarian situations that prevail as we meet today.

This year the international humanitarian community has again faced many challenges. Owing to the length and intensity of the current armed conflicts, millions of people continue to live in situations of protracted displacement. Exacerbated by conflict, famine and food insecurity have reached unprecedented levels. Climate change has increased the risk of extreme weather events.

The current crises have resulted in escalating humanitarian needs. This year alone, humanitarian appeals have reached \$23.5 billion to respond to the needs of more than 100 million people. To date in 2017, Canada has provided \$532.5 million in humanitarian assistance to respond to those crises. However, funding gaps remain. That must be acknowledged. The international community must work together to find a smarter and more efficient way to deliver humanitarian assistance.

We must work to address the root causes of crises. It is less expensive and more effective to prevent crises than to react to them. The assistance provided to countries to build resilient institutions and to establish favourable conditions for lasting peace is equally important.

Finally, we must find ways to address the needs of those affected by conflict or other humanitarian crises. We can do that in several ways.

(spoke in English)

First, we should work to address the needs of women and girls. We know that sexual and gender-based violence, particularly against women and girls, worsens during conflict and natural disasters. Emergencies can also exacerbate gender and social inequalities for women and children, which continue to be experienced well after the crisis is over. In order to reverse that trend, Canada launched the Feminist International Assistance Policy, which includes among its priorities the promotion of gender-responsive humanitarian action.

Canada has also put women and girls at the centre of its efforts to prevent conflict and to promote peace and stability around the world. Only last month, Canada announced two major initiatives to help to deliver on that agenda.

The first initiative — Canada's second national action plan on women and peace and security — will support women's increased representation in the prevention and resolution of conflict and across other peace and security efforts. It will also support access for women and girls to sexual and reproductive health services in emergency and conflict settings.

The second initiative launched by Canada, which was endorsed by 57 countries, is the Vancouver Principles — a set of political commitments aimed at enhancing the ability of personnel in United Nations peacekeeping operations to prevent the recruitment and the use of girls and boys in situations of armed conflict. I encourage all Member States that have not yet done so to endorse that important initiative.

Secondly, we should work together to reduce forced displacement. With record numbers of people worldwide forced from their homes, displacement is one of the pressing global issues of our time. The Global Compact processes, as well as the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement next year, present genuine opportunities to identify and to advance collective approaches to better address displacement.

Thirdly, we should make renewed efforts to allow greater humanitarian access. This year alone, 20 million people have faced famine or acute food insecurity at various levels in north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. While those food crises differ greatly in nature, they have been exacerbated by man-made conflict. Impediments to access, bureaucratic restrictions and attacks on humanitarian workers, including medical personnel, ultimately translate into the denial of life-saving assistance. That is why Canada is deeply troubled that language on humanitarian access continues to be met with resistance throughout negotiations. Allowing and facilitating the rapid, safe and unhindered access of humanitarian assistance are not only the right thing to do but are a matter of international humanitarian law.

That brings me to the fourth and final way in which we can better address the needs of persons in conflict, namely, by upholding our international obligation to respect international humanitarian law. In that regard, Canada is pleased to see strengthened references to the protection of health-care and medical personnel during armed conflict throughout resolutions. Humanitarian

and medical personnel should not risk being injured or killed while working to save the lives of others.

International humanitarian law is as relevant and as important as ever. Wherever international humanitarian law is breached, we all must do our part to help to ensure accountability. Canada is proud to reaffirm its commitment to the protection of civilians by upholding international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, Canada would like to thank United Nations personnel and local and international humanitarian workers and medical personnel for their continued dedication to the delivery of life-saving assistance, often in extremely challenging environments. Their work is inspiring and invaluable, and we remain committed to working to strengthen respect for protection norms that will allow them to continue to perform their life-saving work.

Ms. Alfassam (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is pleased to participate in the consideration of the agenda item "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance". On the basis of our firm belief in and appreciation for the work of those who provide humanitarian and disaster relief assistance and as a country known, since its inception, for its support of philanthropic action, our foreign policy is known as humanitarian diplomacy. In support of the draft resolutions on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, as well as of non-governmental organizations, we underscore the need for such collective action, which falls to the international community in accordance with relevant international legal instruments. We express our appreciation and gratitude to the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for his support of humanitarian assistance, sustainable development, human rights, peace and security.

The State of Kuwait reiterates the importance of strengthening the rapid delivery of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations to vulnerable areas during disasters and crises and to saving lives that are threatened. We are witnessing an increasing number of conflicts and disasters throughout the world. That requires international partnerships to galvanize all common efforts. We are convinced of the importance of the issue and of cooperation to strengthen humanitarian ties, while taking into account

the obstacles to the delivery of relief at the national, regional and international levels. In 1989, we signed the Arab Cooperation Agreement Regulating and Facilitating Relief Operations. In 2016, we signed the amended Arab Cooperation Agreement Regulating and Facilitating Relief Operations.

The articles of the two Agreements provide for the following. First, they provide for the exemption from customs duties and all other fees and taxes of relief materials dispatched by air, land or sea to vulnerable countries. Secondly, they ensure respect for national laws and regulations and technical cooperation among States parties to Arab agreements in the area of disaster management. Thirdly, they provide for streamlining procedures, coordinating relief work and ensuring a rapid response through the transfer of experts and specialized persons engaged in delivering assistance and equipment by facilitating their passage over borders, granting the necessary licences and facilities to military and civilian air, maritime and overland transport operations so that relief assistance may be delivered as soon as possible.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its gratitude to the staff of the United Nations and to those working in the area of international humanitarian assistance for their strenuous efforts. We hope to build a world characterized by an effective humanitarian response to various challenges.

Ms. Blake (United States of America): The United States is pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/72/L.22, entitled “Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel”, and draft resolution A/72/L.24, entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”. We also welcome the General Assembly’s continued attention to the important issue of cooperation on humanitarian assistance and natural disasters.

Last week the United Nations released the *Global Humanitarian Overview 2018*. The key elements of that important report are sobering. In total, 136 million people across the world will need humanitarian assistance and protection in the year ahead, and the United Nations estimates that relief organizations will require approximately \$22.5 billion to assist just 91 million of those in need. Yet again, conflict will continue to be the main driver of humanitarian needs, and protracted violence will force people to flee from

their homes, deny them access to sufficient food and rob them of their means of making a living.

By adopting today’s draft resolutions, the General Assembly will play a crucial role in addressing the challenges by reaffirming the vital function of the United Nations in responding to humanitarian needs around the globe, highlighting how the Organization and other relief organizations can take steps to better assist those in need and by ensuring that scarce resources stretch as far as possible. The draft resolutions also articulate how Member States can better support the humanitarian community’s life-saving work and reaffirm the importance of international laws and norms that are meant to protect those affected by conflict and disasters.

In that regard, the draft resolution on the safety and security of United Nations humanitarian personnel sends an important message of concern and solidarity to the many courageous people who risk their lives to deliver assistance to the millions of people across the world suffering as a result of humanitarian crises. In recent years, there have been far too many deaths and other casualties among humanitarians working to reach people in need. In some cases, aid workers and medical personnel have been deliberately targeted. For that reason, we are pleased to stand behind the draft resolution, and we convey our sincerest gratitude and support to the United Nations and humanitarian personnel working in many of the world’s most dangerous places.

Likewise, we welcome the inclusion of language in the draft resolution on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations to underscore the importance of coordinated and comprehensive needs assessments, which help us better understand and respond to the most urgent needs on the ground. Implementing joint, impartial and timely needs assessments and prioritizing needs-based humanitarian response plans and measures to reduce fraud waste and abuse are also critical to ensuring that scarce financial and other resources reach as many people as possible.

Although we welcome the adoption of the draft resolutions, we would like to take this opportunity to make important points of clarification on some of their elements.

We underscore that General Assembly resolutions, and many of the outcome documents referenced therein, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, are non-binding documents that do not create rights or obligations under international law, or bind States to financial commitments. With regard to the reaffirmation of the 2030 Agenda, the United States recognizes it as a global framework for sustainable development that can help countries work towards global peace and prosperity. We applaud the call for shared responsibility in the Agenda and emphasize that all countries have a role to play in achieving its vision.

We also strongly support national responsibility, stressed in the Agenda. However, each country has its own development priorities, and we emphasize that countries must work towards implementation in accordance with their own national policies and priorities. We also highlight our mutual recognition of paragraph 58 of the 2030 Agenda that the implementation of the Agenda must respect, and be without prejudice to, the independent mandates of other processes and institutions, including negotiations, and does not prejudice or serve as precedent for decisions and actions under way in other forums. For example, the Agenda does not represent a commitment to provide new market access for goods or services. The Agenda does not interpret or alter World Trade Organization agreements or decisions, including the agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property.

We take this opportunity to make important points of clarification regarding the reaffirmation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the omnibus humanitarian draft resolution. We specifically note that much of the trade-related language in the Action Agenda has been overtaken by events that have occurred since July 2015 and is immaterial. Indeed, some of the intervening events happened just months after the release of the outcome document. Therefore, any reaffirmation of the outcome document has no standing for ongoing work and negotiations involving trade. We note that, on 4 August, the United States communicated to the United Nations depositary that it intends to withdraw from the Paris Agreement as soon as it is eligible to do so, consistent with the terms of the agreement, unless the President can identify suitable terms for re-engagement.

While our climate policy is under review, we must note our concerns with language related to the Paris Agreement and climate change across many of the draft resolutions the Assembly is considering. Furthermore, the language on climate change in this draft resolution is

without prejudice to the evolving position of the United States on the issue. We recognize that climate change is a complex, global challenge and stand ready to continue working with others on the issue. We also reiterate our views on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction set forth in the explanation of position of the United States delivered on 18 March 2015.

In addition, with regard to the language in the omnibus draft resolution that reaffirms the New York Declaration, we reiterate the views expressed in the explanation of position of the United States on that document with regard to migration, which is available in document A/71/415.

Furthermore, the United States understands that the General Assembly's resolutions do not change conventional or customary international law, including international humanitarian law. To be clear, and with particular reference to the draft resolution focused on natural disasters, the occurrence of a natural disaster does not trigger the law of armed conflict. We also do not read any of the three draft resolutions or other resolutions of the Assembly to imply that States must join or implement obligations under international instruments to which they are not party.

The United States also understands that any reaffirmation of prior documents applies only to those States that affirmed them initially — and in the case of international treaties or conventions, to those States that are party. The United States always seeks to uphold international humanitarian law and as a matter of policy seeks to promote adherence to the law of war by others. Although violations of law occur during armed conflict, the United States firmly believes that the vast majority of States consistently exhibit good-faith efforts to implement their respective obligations under international humanitarian law.

We believe the international community's focus on perceived wrongdoings and injustices during armed conflict is primarily because of the strength of international humanitarian law, and not because international humanitarian law has become eroded or is flawed. The United States acknowledges, however, that when international humanitarian law is disregarded, the scale of human suffering around the globe increases. It therefore stresses the importance of the protection of civilians. As a policy matter, the United States welcomes the focus on those issues in the draft resolutions. Compliance with international

humanitarian law by all parties will remain essential to efforts to reduce the scale of human suffering caused by conflict worldwide. In that regard, we also underscore that conflict and access constraints, rather than volatile commodity prices, are the key drivers of famine and humanitarian crises.

Lastly, the United States believes that women should have equal access to health care, including in humanitarian emergencies. We remain committed to the principles laid out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action. As has been made clear for many years, there was international consensus that those documents do not create new international rights, including the right to abortion. We do not recognize abortion as a method of family planning, nor do we support abortion in our reproductive health assistance.

Let me reiterate that the United States is not only the world's largest humanitarian donor, but also the world's largest donor of bilateral reproductive health and family planning assistance, and believes that in humanitarian emergencies, women's access to health care can be life-saving and should be available from the onset of an emergency and onward, whenever possible.

We request that this statement be made part of the official record of this meeting.

Mr. Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we welcome the Secretary-General's reports (A/72/76, A/72/348 and /A/72/358) on this subject, as well as on the four draft resolutions to be adopted, one of which (A/72/L.23) was introduced on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, another (A/72/L.24), which my country has the honour to co-sponsor, was facilitated by Sweden, and two others (A/72/L.22 and A/72/L.25) that were introduced by the representative of Estonia on behalf of the States members of the European Union.

El Salvador welcomes the adoption of those draft resolutions, which we hope will, among other things, contribute to fostering a more consultative and inclusive approach to humanitarian assistance; strengthen alliances at the global, regional, national and local levels; improve the efficiency and effectiveness of assistance; strengthen the capacities of developing countries; improve access to information and communication technologies; implement innovative practices based on

knowledge; and develop sustainable solutions that will ultimately save more lives at the local level.

We would also like to highlight the role of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as our strong determination to implement the Sendai Framework to reduce disaster risks and prevent humanitarian crises due to natural disasters. To that end, we must work on adapting our regulatory and legal frameworks, improving our understanding of disaster risk, including risk analysis at all levels of planning in our countries, reducing current levels of vulnerability, threats and risks, decreasing exposure to workplace hazards, avoiding the re-emergence of post-disaster risk, ensuring that new investments are sustained in risk analyses and increasing the resilience of health infrastructure.

We would also like to welcome the reference included in the omnibus draft resolution A/72/L.24 to the contributions made at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, which had the purpose of calling for action and commitment in the face of the adverse effects of climate change, poverty, conflicts and even inequality. We acknowledge the publication by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) of the first follow-up report on the pledges made during the World Humanitarian Summit, and we highlight the validity of many of the conclusions of that initiative, which, although not mandated by the General Assembly, nevertheless led to proposals on aspects of assistance, emphasis on prevention and modalities for cost reduction and the empowerment of local humanitarian actors, which should not be ignored by the membership of the Assembly, but rather incorporated into specific intergovernmental mandates.

El Salvador and the entire Central American region have been affected repeatedly and increasingly by extreme hydrometeorological phenomena associated with climate change and the El Niño phenomenon, such as drought and floods, which have triggered humanitarian emergencies, displacement, food insecurity and climate-displaced people. In that regard, we again highlight the content of resolution 70/110 regarding the 2015-2016 El Niño cycle, and we call on the General Assembly to continue to pay attention to that issue, both in its discussions on disaster prevention and humanitarian assistance. Similarly, we urge the Assembly to increasingly recognize the impact of small-scale and slow-moving disasters that, despite not generating widespread international attention, lead to

widespread and irreversible damage to the economic, social and environmental structures of our countries. Those efforts should also be closely linked to internal processes and international cooperation for adaptation to climate change.

We are aware that it is essential to strengthen the links among the main regional humanitarian actors, and we highlight the role of the regional meetings on international humanitarian assistance mechanisms to disseminate the mission, objectives and tools that OCHA makes available to States for better management of humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian assistance worldwide requires respect for international humanitarian law — a body of law that has been ignored and minimized in recent years in too many places on the planet that have been hit by humanitarian crises not brought on by the ravages of nature, but rather by armed conflicts. El Salvador therefore supports the longstanding process in Geneva by the co-facilitators of Switzerland and the International Committee of the Red Cross to develop a mechanism that more specifically safeguards respect for the principles of international humanitarian law, in view of its adoption at the next International Conference of the Red Cross, in a couple of years' time.

With the adoption of today's draft resolutions, we are participating in building a humanitarian programme for the present, both more effective and inclusive, which will contribute to improving the humanitarian response and prepare us to face future challenges. That is essential since the emergence of humanitarian crises caused by disasters or conflicts often result from failures in the prevention and effectiveness of the immediate humanitarian response. That may also lead to breakdowns in political agreement or the implementation of existing agreements. We cannot fail to acknowledge the Secretary-General's intention to return to prevention as one of the main roles of the United Nations system, through its proposal for administrative reform and the peace and security pillar.

Robust implementation of development policies through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — including Sustainable Development Goal 16, on the promotion and respect of civil, political, social, economic and cultural human rights, as well as those related to specific populations in situations of vulnerability, the promotion and defence of multilateralism and true international cooperation, in recognition of our

internal and international common but differentiated responsibilities — are our best allies in the prevention of humanitarian crises and in reducing their impact when they unfortunately occur.

El Salvador once again thanks all the Member States that were actively involved in the negotiation of the four draft resolutions that we will adopt today, as well as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, OCHA and other organs and offices of the Secretariat and the United Nations system in their prevention and response actions. Our country also hopes to continue participating actively in the necessary construction and improvement of the global humanitarian system and hopes that the international support of the United Nations system in the region of Central America will remain constant when necessary.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): At the outset, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports (A/72/76, A/72/348 and A/72/358) on the humanitarian activities of the United Nations system. I also would like to commend the efforts of United Nations humanitarian agencies in their life-saving work, as well as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, whose role in ensuring an effective coordination in the delivery of humanitarian assistance remains essential.

The *Global Humanitarian Overview 2018*, which was published last week, once again presented a stark reality. There are 136 million people in need of assistance and protection in crises, and the drivers of the majority of the needs are again conflict and violence. Despite all our collective efforts and the fact that 18 months have elapsed since the first World Humanitarian Summit, the gap between humanitarian needs and the resources available to address them continue to widen. It is hard to ignore and sit idle in the face of the devastating effects of man-made crises, such as those ravaging Syria, Myanmar, South Sudan and Yemen. The level of unimaginable suffering in those conflicts and disregard for international humanitarian law must stop. Regrettably they do not stop there, nor elsewhere.

The adverse effects of climate change, the rapid- and slow-onset disasters resulting from climate events and the resurgent risk of famine affected millions in 2017. The number of forcibly displaced persons continued to grow to more than 65.5 million people globally. Millions of children are at risk of starting their lives without shelter or education, and, most important, without hope. As we speak, Turkey is sheltering close to 3.3 million

Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans who fled violence. From the onset of the current wave of displacement, we have called for greater global responsibility-sharing.

As long as we can demonstrate political leadership and share the same moral responsibility on the global scale, it does not matter if the people in need are at our doorstep or in far-away lands. That is the basic premise that keeps Turkish humanitarians of our national agencies, such as the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of Turkey, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency Directorate and Turkish Red Crescent, and our non-governmental organizations working selflessly to assist the displaced hosted in our country or those in need in different corners of the world, such as Somalia, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Iraq.

Indeed, that is the same premise that led Turkey to strongly support the organization of the first World Humanitarian Summit from its very inception. At the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, in May 2016, 9,000 representatives of Member States and other stakeholders came together and made more than 3,700 commitments to deliver on the ambitious changes called for in the Agenda for Humanity. In Istanbul, we announced our support for the commitments in the five core responsibilities set out in that Agenda and made national commitments to that end. Turkey is pleased to note that the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit are driving change. In that regard, I would like to refer to a few.

Efforts to transcend the humanitarian development divide through a new way of working are gaining traction. The policy and field-level work to that end, which Turkey contributes to, receives strong support from the leadership of the United Nations. The Secretary-General's focus on prevention builds on the call from the Summit for a new era of political leadership, matched by effective financing and tools, such as mediation, to prevent and end crises.

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the subsequent processes for global compacts reinforce the commitments made in Istanbul. Together we are making progress to better address the short- and long-term needs of refugees, improve support to host communities and assist migrants in vulnerable situations.

Humanitarian financing is being increasingly targeted towards reducing need, risk and vulnerability.

With the support of Member States, agencies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East are developing encouraging new partnerships with international financial institutions, including the World Bank and the Islamic Development Bank, to scale up financing to better address root causes.

The Summit clearly underlined the growing awareness of the world humanitarian community about our common problems. The changes the Summit called for have the potential to transform the humanitarian landscape in order to save more lives and accelerate progress for people in crisis contexts, so that people can benefit from the universal and ambitious Sustainable Development Goals. As humanitarian needs mount, this is no time to retreat from the commitments made at the Summit. Rather, this is the moment for all stakeholders to maintain the global momentum that was generated. Among other priorities in 2018, we should continue our efforts on the following fronts.

First, we must redouble our efforts to resolve conflicts and place prevention at the centre of the United Nations work.

Secondly, we must address the need for fair burden-sharing, adopt the global compacts for migrants and refugees and vigorously implement them to make real changes in the lives of people on the move.

Thirdly, we need to uphold our obligations to protect civilians and end the culture of impunity around violations.

Fourthly, we must reinforce the objectives of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda for Humanity to achieve a cultural shift from managing crises to managing risk.

Fifthly, we need to embrace the new way of working as a vehicle to bring humanitarian and development analysis, planning and financing closer together to work towards shared outcomes.

While doing all of that, we should work in close partnership with all stakeholders and place people at the centre of our work.

As the second-largest individual humanitarian donor in the world in 2016, Turkey's humanitarian assistance efforts continue in that spirit. We are

confident that the Istanbul Summit was a point of departure for all of us to achieve lasting change.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Humanitarian agencies reached more people in need in 2017 than ever before. The current crises have resulted in dramatic levels of humanitarian need, which present increasingly complex challenges, with countless people being forced to flee their homes to save their lives. As armed conflict continues to be the main driver of humanitarian crises, it will cause the largest proportion of humanitarian needs in 2018. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), next year a staggering 136 million people across the world will need humanitarian assistance and protection.

In the light of that, the adoption of today's draft resolution A/72/L.24 is especially important for Ukraine, which today faces the most serious humanitarian challenge since it achieved independence in 1991. I would like to stress once again that the dire humanitarian situation in the eastern part of Ukraine is a direct consequence of the ongoing Russian aggression against my country. According to the United Nations, 3.4 million people need humanitarian assistance and protection. After almost four years of armed conflict, about 1.5 million Ukrainians are registered as internally displaced persons, amounting to 4 per cent of Ukraine's overall population.

Two hundred thousand people living within five kilometres of the line of contact in the Government controlled area experience an average of 47 clashes a day — that is essentially one shelling every 30 minutes. Civilians continue to face serious risks to their safety, well-being and basic rights due to the active and ongoing hostilities, as well as the saturation of land mines and other explosive ordinance. According to the United Nations, the area is one of the most mine-contaminated stretches of land in the world.

The continuation of the Russian aggression could also lead to an ecological and humanitarian catastrophe. Key civilian infrastructure, including tanks filled with deadly chlorine gas, is regularly under fire, while a significant number of coal mines are flooded. That is exactly why a cessation of hostilities remains essential in enabling an effective humanitarian response and ensuring the protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel.

We firmly believe that a comprehensive settlement can be achieved through the deployment of a United

Nations peacekeeping mission in eastern Ukraine with the main purpose being to stop hostilities and restore full Ukrainian Government control over the State border. Only that would allow for the improvement of the humanitarian situation in the whole area. To that end, the Parliament of Ukraine has adopted legislation on the creation of the necessary conditions for a peaceful settlement of the situation in certain districts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Ukraine had to increase expenditures on national security and defence up to 5 per cent of its gross domestic product in order to cope with the security situation in the region, even as the economic situation in the country is severely affected by the external factors I mentioned.

It is against that difficult backdrop that the Government of Ukraine is doing its utmost to address the humanitarian needs of people affected by the conflict and to focus on improving protection for internally displaced persons, including with regard to housing and reintegration. In that regard, Ukraine is grateful for the assistance provided by the United Nations system, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme, UNICEF and OCHA. We are also grateful to other agencies and bilateral partners — especially the European Union, the United States and Canada — and to the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international non-governmental organizations that continue to support Ukraine, providing assistance to millions of people in need. In particular, we are thankful to OCHA for advancing its humanitarian response plans, the last of which, for 2018, aims to provide critical humanitarian assistance and protection to 2.3 million people in need.

Ukraine fully supports the Secretary-General's ambitious United Nations reform efforts, in particular in the area of humanitarian assistance. For that endeavour to succeed, we believe that the following steps are critical.

First, the international community has to engage in multi-year planning for humanitarian needs and enhance coordination between the United Nations and other humanitarian actors on the ground.

Secondly, in order to address the increase in protracted crises, we need greater political and financial investment in mediation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Thirdly, we must improve humanitarian work by increasing the authority of United Nations Resident Coordinators and by strengthening alignment and cooperation between development agencies.

Fourthly, we must respond faster to crises in a way that is more attuned to the needs of the affected people.

Fifthly, and finally, we must ensure safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): Bangladesh is currently experiencing one of the world's worst humanitarian catastrophes of recent times, with the influx of nearly 630,000 people — mostly Rohingya — from Myanmar's Rakhine state. There are reports of ongoing arson attacks in central and northern parts of Rakhine state, and between 100 to 400 people are still pouring into Bangladesh on a daily basis. The relevant United Nations entities, along with their partner non-governmental organizations, are fighting a race against time to support our national Government and local authorities to cope with the severe strain on available services, arrangements and resources.

Some of the figures that are regularly updated by the Inter Sector Coordination Group can be quite telling about the enormity of the challenge. According to the latest update, more than 600,000 people have been reached with site-management assistance; 650,973 people have gained access to basic sanitation; 323,940 children have been administered vaccinations for measles and rubella; 10,893 children have been admitted to blanket supplementary feeding programmes; 124,00 households have received at least two sleeping mats; 10,605 adolescent boys and girls have received life-skill sessions; and 1,544 teachers have been recruited so far.

The newly arrived population is entirely dependent upon humanitarian assistance for food and other basic life-saving needs. The settlements that have spontaneously developed face overcongestion, which has hardly been mitigated by the allocation of 3,000 acres of land by the Government in a particular area.

We urge donor countries and organizations to respond to the pressing and increasing need for the resources identified by the humanitarian actors concerned, in the spirit of responsibility and burden-sharing. We reiterate our appreciation for the humanitarian assistance provided so far and the pledges made to the tune of \$434 million for the first

six-month period in response to the revised United Nations response plan. We thank the European Union and Kuwait for convening the ministerial-level pledging conference on 23 October in Geneva.

While our Government continues to engage in good faith with the Myanmar authorities in order to facilitate the return of the displaced persons, it remains incumbent upon the international community to work together with Myanmar to create an environment for the safe, dignified and voluntary return of the Rohingya to their homes, without fear of reprisals or discrimination. As noted earlier this week by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

“The world cannot countenance a hasty window-dressing of these shocking atrocities, bundling people back to conditions of severe discrimination and latent violence, which seem certain to lead in the future to further suffering and more movements of people”.

There is no way the world can afford to relegate the Rohingya crisis to yet another forgotten emergency, as we regrettably tend to see in some other cases.

It is also critical that the Rohingya receive humanitarian assistance without any discrimination in northern Rakhine state and other parts.

We underscore yet again that there can be no pretext for a breach of international humanitarian law under the guise of counter-terrorist operations.

Although the World Food Programme has been allowed to resume operations to a limited extent, it has been reported that its access has not been unfettered, as called for by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

It is evident that the still-unfolding humanitarian crisis of the Rohingya cannot be resolved without a peaceful, just and lasting political solution to the root causes of their disenfranchisement and displacement. The United Nations and its Members States have rallied behind the road map outlined in the report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, chaired by Kofi Annan, which we believe can create a real difference in the situation on the ground. It remains critical that the report's recommendations be considered for implementation by all actors concerned in Myanmar, without resorting to a selective approach. In order to build trust and confidence among the Rohingya, it is imperative that those responsible for committing

horrific crimes against them be duly identified and brought to justice.

We stress that Bangladesh can likely only bilaterally address the issue of possible voluntary repatriation of the Rohingya to Myanmar, but all related larger questions and issues will have to be addressed by Myanmar with the international community's continued support and monitoring on behalf of the Rohingya. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights asked the following pertinent question to all of us:

“The Rohingya have been physically attacked, oppressed, deprived of nationality and rights. How much do people have to endure before their suffering is acknowledged and their identity and rights are recognized, by their Government and by the world?”

In general, Bangladesh attaches great importance to the United Nations humanitarian and emergency relief assistance, and remains supportive of international efforts to help build resilient societies and nations to respond to humanitarian challenges. We unequivocally condemn the indiscriminate armed attacks against humanitarian personnel convoys, medical and peacekeeping personnel and civilian infrastructure that are essential for humanitarian operations. We urge all parties to conflicts to refrain from such egregious attacks, blockades and impediments, in conformity with international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, we thank all facilitators for their diligent work on the draft resolutions that our delegation is pleased to support.

Mr. Awad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We meet every year to reiterate our moral and legal commitments to providing humanitarian assistance to all those in need, without discrimination, politicization or blackmail and in accordance with the humanitarian principles that we all believe in. And each time we emphasize the need not to improperly use humanitarian services to advance a political agenda or defame certain Governments of other United Nations Member States, as that jeopardizes humanitarian work itself. In my statement today, I would to clarify the position of my country, Syria, with regard to the various United Nations draft resolutions that deal with humanitarian issues.

We reiterate that the Syrian Government is committed to its principled and unchanged stance,

namely, that humanitarian assistance should be provided to all those in need without discrimination and in respect of the guiding principles of the United Nations, particularly regarding humanitarian assistance in emergency situations and in accordance with resolution 46/182. First and foremost, it is important to respect the national sovereignty of each State and the role of the States concerned when providing and distributing humanitarian assistance in our territories, and demonstrate integrity and impartiality, without politicization. We deeply regret that some States presenting draft resolutions today, as well as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, politicize current humanitarian crises. That is why we must stress the following point: the only way to solve humanitarian crises is by addressing their root causes, without politicization or selectivity. I would like to make the following comments with regard to today's draft resolutions.

First, with regard to the fight against terrorism, my country's delegation believes that the reference to terrorist acts as one of the main causes of humanitarian crises, which has been ignored by the sponsors of draft resolutions for many years, is a significant step forward. States have finally admitted that violence, poverty and disasters are not the only causes of displacement and humanitarian crises. There is another root cause of such crises: terrorism. As I stated before, that is indeed a significant step forward — but it is not enough.

Some sponsors of the draft resolutions, in particular Western countries, continue to put forward their own arguments. They do not want to stress the importance of coordinating humanitarian assistance, although it is the lack of coordination that often leads to terrorist attacks and challenges in providing humanitarian assistance. That is why those States should have agreed to using stronger, clearer language that unequivocally condemns terrorist acts. That would have been possible in draft resolution A/72/L.22, entitled “Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel”.

Terrorism is the main cause of all humanitarian crises today. That holds true in my country and region, and beyond. Proof of that lies in the terrorist frenzy we are seeing today, which continues to claim lives throughout the world. We have pointed that out for many years.

My country's delegation also wishes to reiterate that terrorism is the root cause of the suffering of the Syrian people, in particular of women and children. Combating terrorism requires coordination and cooperation with the Syrian Government in its fight against terrorism on behalf of the entire world, and with the support of friendly States. How many times have we asked for pressure to be put on States that aid armed terrorist groups in my country? We must end the funding, arming and training of such groups, in strict adherence to the relevant Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism. The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations must also be respected. Regrettably, we have yet to receive a positive response to those repeated requests.

Secondly, we must consider the negative effects of coercive unilateral economic measures. The United Nations has often rejected and strongly condemned coercive unilateral economic measures because they are illegitimate and have serious adverse effects on the well-being of peoples and the economies of countries. Many of the sponsors of the draft resolution continue to impose such measures despite many calls from international organizations to end to the practice. Those measures have a catastrophic effect on the Syrian economy and on the standard of living of the Syrian people. It has led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Syrian citizens, who have been forced to leave their country. It has a serious effect on emergency and humanitarian response plans in Syria.

We recall the report entitled "Humanitarian impact of Syria-related unilateral restrictive measures", which was published by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in September 2016. It showed the deleterious impact of the unilateral measures imposed on Syria by the United States and the European Union, which have had a negative effect on the provision of health care, education and energy services, and on Syrians in general. It has also prevented humanitarian assistance from reaching those in need. Moreover, such measures have also posed a threat to activities conducted by many United Nations agencies and foreign non-governmental organizations working in Syria. It is strange to see that today's draft resolution makes reference to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development but makes no mention of the negative effects of coercive unilateral measures. How can the Agenda for Sustainable Development be achieved when sanctions are imposed? Many will therefore be

left behind because the imposition of sanctions is at variance with the 2030 Agenda.

In conclusion, I would like to exercise my right of reply with regard to the accusations made by the representative of Israel, which is an occupying Power. Such accusations serve only to conceal the crimes committed by Israel against our Palestinian brothers and against Syrian citizens, such as the violations that occurred today in occupied Jerusalem.

The representative of Israel — the occupying Power — referred to the crisis in my country by stating that it is one example among many. However, it did not list the root causes of the crisis or the Israeli occupation, which has exacerbated the crisis. Israel supports, finances and protects armed terrorist groups, such as Da'esh, Al-Nusra and others. Members of such groups have admitted that they have received assistance from Israel. Israel has also committed several acts of aggression, such as on 4 December against the armed forces of the Syrian Arab Republic, even after we had vanquished terrorist groups in many parts of the country. It is very strange to hear the representative of an occupying Power speak of humanitarian assistance when that State occupies Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan. The occupying Power speaks about humanitarian assistance, while committing grave violations against other States. Occupation is a crime that cannot be justified.

Mr. Kononuchenko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation has consistently called for enhanced cooperation in humanitarian assistance under the United Nations. Russia is steadily contributing to that process, both through regular contributions to the budgets of United Nations humanitarian agencies and by sending humanitarian aid and Russian rescue units to those regions most in need of humanitarian assistance.

The amount of Russian funding to United Nations humanitarian agencies and direct contributions to humanitarian appeals totalled more than \$65 million in 2017. Moreover, we allocated \$1.5 million to the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, which we consider to be a key multilateral instrument to finance United Nations humanitarian appeals. We support the call by the Secretary-General to increase the Fund's capitalization to \$1 billion due to the increase in the number of those in need throughout the world.

Our country actively participated in negotiating resolution 46/182, which laid the foundation for the work of United Nations humanitarian agencies and their partners in conflict and disaster situations. We are convinced that the humanitarian principles reaffirmed by the General Assembly for 26 years now remain topical today. We insist on their inviolability and call on all international humanitarian actors to be neutral and impartial and to respect State sovereignty, as enshrined in the resolution.

We deem the practice of using humanitarian agenda as leverage to achieve political goals to be absolutely inadmissible. People's lives should not become a bargaining chip in geopolitical games. We are of the same view when it comes to any attempts to link possible humanitarian cooperation to domestic political processes. We are guided by the need to ensure a unified approach to the humanitarian response, and not to allow for double standards that are emerging in particular in the increased imbalance in the financing of humanitarian operations. That is not a normal situation, and it runs counter to the fundamental principle of humanity.

In our view, such attempts to integrate political and human rights components in humanitarian response are counterproductive. Those areas of work differ significantly, both in practical terms and from the point of view of existing legal frameworks. Assigning inappropriate functions to humanitarian agencies could negatively impact the effectiveness of their work. We believe that everyone should work in their own field. That is what guides us in assessing approaches put forward for United Nations reforms.

A year and a half has passed since the holding of the United Nations World Humanitarian Summit. In that time, endless discussions were held about whether the chosen format for the Summit was appropriate and on the feasibility of having its outcomes included in the work of United Nations humanitarian agencies. The result of those discussions are well known: the overwhelming majority of Member States, including the Russian Federation, did not support the Summit's final commitments and are not willing to incorporate them into the activities of the humanitarian wing of the United Nations.

Nevertheless, we agree that we must move forward and, as before, we remain open to considering innovative models for humanitarian response. It is crucial that those

discussions be intergovernmental and open in nature. Proof of our readiness is Russia's constructive position during the negotiations on the draft resolutions on humanitarian assistance, which were supplemented by a range of useful elements. We call on the humanitarian community to be guided by those provisions, and we thank our Swedish and Moroccan colleagues for their effective and skilful coordination, which allowed us to reach consensus over the course of 25 years.

With all the difficulties and discrepancies in the approaches taken by States to humanitarian response, we must somehow find common ground. Last week in Geneva the United Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs presented its *Global Humanitarian Overview 2017*, which indicates that the total number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in the world reached a record 135.7 million people, and the financing needed has reached \$22.5 billion. Such a large-scale and multifaceted problem can be resolved only together and only in conditions of mutual trust and respect. Russia is ready for such work.

Unfortunately, the Ukrainian representative once again was unable to hold back from politicization of this purely humanitarian issue. He has no willingness to accept the obvious fact that the Government of Ukraine unleashed and is supporting this brotherly bloody conflict on the south-east territory of its own country.

Ms. Alateibi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): The United Arab Emirates takes pride in joining other Member States in co-sponsoring draft resolution A/72/L.24, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations". We commend the efforts of the coordinator in navigating different perspectives with a view to coming up with an ambitious and universally acceptable text. In the light of the multiple humanitarian crises in the world, the draft resolution serves as an important reminder of the stakeholders' obligations. This is also an opportunity for us to take stock of recent humanitarian efforts and to draw on the many lessons learned this year.

We are also pleased to see a new focus this year on practical measures that are prompting United Nations planning and expenditure operations towards prevention. We believe that a rapid United Nations transition to forecast-based financing systems will be a key mitigation tool for harsh weather and other predictable events. Moreover, we welcome the more

ambitious language on access to multi-hazard early-warning systems, although we hope that we can collectively soon embrace the goal of universal access. Furthermore, both interventions capture the synergies in the humanitarian and development fields.

In conclusion, we would like to stress the importance of the Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds that are mentioned in the draft resolution. Those will be critical instruments for coherence in the United Nations work on the ground and for repositioning the United Nations development system to explicitly operate along the humanitarian development track.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker for this meeting in the debate on agenda item 73 and its sub-items (a) to (c). We will hear the remaining speakers, including a number of explanations of vote before the voting, on Monday, at 10 a.m., in this Hall.

Before giving the floor to speakers in exercise of the right of reply, may I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Pye Aung (Myanmar): My delegation takes the floor to exercise its right of reply in response to the statement made by the representative of Bangladesh.

On several occasions, including in the Third Committee, my delegation has provided updates on Myanmar's continued efforts regarding the repatriation process for displaced persons, the revision of humanitarian assistance and bilateral and regional cooperation, including with the United Nations. I would like to reiterate that we take heed of the international community's concern regarding the current humanitarian situation in Rakhine state and on our border with Bangladesh. We are committed to taking all possible action to alleviate the plight of those people and immediately restoring peace and normalcy to the region.

The Government of Myanmar is deploying all means and resources possible to address the humanitarian situation at the border. The Committee for the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine state, chaired by State

Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in place since 17 October, has begun its work.

We will continue to work with our neighbours and regional and international partners in good faith to address the humanitarian issue at the border. During the visit of the Home Minister of Bangladesh to Myanmar, two memorandums of understanding were signed — on the establishment of a border liaison office and on security cooperation and dialogue. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh visited Myanmar from 22 to 23 November, during which the arrangement on the return of displaced persons from Rakhine state was signed on 23 November. That arrangement is based on the joint statement that was signed by the Foreign Ministers of the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh in 1992, which includes general guiding principles and policy arrangements to systematically verify and receive the displaced persons from Rakhine state.

We are now finalizing terms for forming a joint working group. The repatriation process will start two months following the signing of the agreement. Myanmar is making sincere efforts towards the expeditious implementation of the repatriation process. Likewise, we need cooperation and continuing support from our partners. We believe that the issues that emerge between neighbouring countries must be resolved amicably through bilateral negotiations.

The present arrangement that has been agreed upon by those two countries is based on the traditions of friendship and a good-neighbourly relationship between Myanmar and Bangladesh. I would like to reiterate that Myanmar remains committed to working with Bangladesh in the same spirit and goodwill, and will continue to cooperate with all regional and international partners to address the remaining challenges.

Ms. Fisher-tsin (Israel): In response to the accusations made by the Syrian representative, as we have said numerous times, we should not expect to hear the truth from a representative of a State that is committing war crimes against its own people. Let me remind the General Assembly that while the Syrian regime is butchering innocent civilians with chemical weapons, it is the State of Israel that provides medical treatment to Syrian women, children and the elderly.

Mr. Awad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I take the floor to exercise my right of reply in response

to the statement delivered by the representative of Israel, the occupying Power.

Israel is supporting terrorists in their war against Syria. That is a secret to nobody and cannot be interpreted in any other way, which is something that all countries and all peoples in the world are aware of. Israel is an officially declared partner of the Al-Nusra Front, Da'esh and other terrorist organizations that are receiving weapons, financing and logistical assistance from Israel.

It is for that reason that Israel committed an act of aggression against my country on 4 December in coordination with its terrorist partners, which constitutes

proof of the partnership and coordination — I would go as far as to say the coalition — among Israel, the Al-Nusra Front, Da'esh and other terrorist groups. The occupying authorities continue to act with aggression towards the Syrian Arab Republic. That is a violation of Security Council resolutions on disengagement, which prevent the Syrian army from moving forward and fighting terrorist groups, namely, the Al-Nusra Front and Da'esh. Indeed, Israeli aggression has occurred increasingly often — a current practise by Israel that allows it to support terrorists after they have been defeated various times on Syrian territory.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.