



# General Assembly

Seventy-second session

**75<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting  
Friday, 22 December 2017, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Lajčák . . . . . (Slovakia)

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

## Agenda item 114 (continued)

### (b) Election of the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

#### Note by the Secretary-General (A/72/661)

**The President:** As stated in the Secretary-General's note (A/72/661), the General Assembly, in its resolution 56/206, decided that the secretariat of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme should be headed by an Executive Director at the level of Under-Secretary-General, to be elected by the Assembly for a term of four years upon nomination by the Secretary-General after consultation with Member States.

In the light of the aforementioned provisions of resolution 56/206, the Secretary-General nominates Dato' Maimunah Mohd Sharif of Malaysia for election by the Assembly as Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme at the Under-Secretary-General level, for a term of office of four years. Accordingly, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to elect Dato' Maimunah Mohd Sharif as Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for a term of office of four years?

*It was so decided* (decision 72/413).

**The President:** As stated in the Secretary-General's note, the effective date of her appointment will be communicated to the Assembly at a later stage.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 114.

### (c) Election of two members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Committee

**The President:** Members will recall that in accordance with paragraph 4 (a) to (e) of resolution 60/180, of 20 December 2005, the Organizational Committee shall comprise seven members of the Security Council, including permanent members; seven members of the Economic and Social Council, elected from regional groups; five top providers of assessed contributions to United Nations budgets and of voluntary contributions to United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, including a standing peacebuilding fund; five top providers of military personnel and civilian police to United Nations missions; and seven additional members elected by the General Assembly, giving due representation from all regional groups in the overall composition of the Committee.

Members will also recall that, at the 80th plenary meeting of its seventieth session, the Assembly elected El Salvador and Montenegro as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for a two-year term of office, beginning on 1 January 2016, and that at the 63rd plenary meeting of its seventy-first session, the Assembly elected Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Kenya and Mexico as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, for a two-year term of office, beginning on 1 January 2017.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



Consequently, the General Assembly will need to fill the seats vacated by El Salvador and Montenegro, whose two-year term of office expires on 31 December 2017.

The Assembly will now proceed to the election of two members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission. By its resolution 60/261, of 8 May 2006, the Assembly decided that the members of the Organizational Committee shall serve for renewable terms of two years, as applicable. Accordingly, El Salvador and Montenegro are eligible for immediate re-election.

Regarding candidatures for the two vacant seats, I should like to inform members that the group of Eastern European States has endorsed the Czech Republic, and that from the group of Latin American and Caribbean States, El Salvador is the only candidate.

Members will recall that by its resolution 60/261, the General Assembly decided that the rules of procedure and established practice of the Assembly for the election of members of its subsidiary bodies shall apply to its election of members of the Committee. For this election, rules 92 and 94 shall be applicable. Accordingly, the election shall be held by secret ballot.

However, I should also like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Since the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled, may I take it that the General Assembly decides to elect the Czech Republic and El Salvador as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for a two-year term of office, beginning on 1 January 2018?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** I congratulate the Czech Republic and El Salvador on their election as

members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 114?

*It was so decided.*

#### **Agenda item 177**

#### **Impact of exponential technological change on sustainable development and peace**

##### **Draft resolution (A/72/L.38)**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.38.

**Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico) (spoke in Spanish):** One of the greatest challenges that our Organization faces is anticipating challenges and preparing for their impact in a timely manner. In general, we react instead of preventing. Even when there are clear indicators, we often decide to ignore them due to our rigid mindset. That is the case with technological change that is unfolding at an extremely rapid, even exponential pace, and has begun to transform the most basic aspects of our daily lives, with a disruptive effect that in some cases we do not yet fully understand. We must recall that technology is by nature neutral. It is we who choose how it is to be used.

Today, artificial intelligence is leading us towards a new industrial revolution. The growing digitization and automation of economic activity is already having a twofold impact. It replaces human capital, but it also generates new jobs and reduces working hours. It also reduces the price of goods and services through collaborative global economies.

In the Charter of the United Nations, we have committed to promoting social progress and to elevating the standard of living of our societies. The creation of a core group of 25 countries and the inclusion of the item in the agenda of the plenary of the Assembly are steps in that direction by enabling the impact of the exponential technological change in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to be understood in all its depth and complexity.

The virtue of draft resolution A/72/L.38, which we are introducing today, lies fundamentally in the fact that it will set a dialogue in motion. Nevertheless, to

be precise, its aim is neither to limit nor to regulate technological development per se, but to understand and address its effects. Outside of our negotiation halls, robust answers are expected, and they cannot be limited by bureaucratic inertia, agreed language or resistance to change.

The draft resolution therefore charts a road map. First, it invites Member States to consider the challenges posed by technological development and to devise national strategies and public policies. Secondly, it calls on relevant United Nations mechanisms and entities, both in New York and in Geneva, to incorporate this perspective into its work. Thirdly, it provides a mandate for the forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals of the Economic and Social Council so that, next June, it can present the findings of the United Nations system so that these may be discussed and enhanced by our countries' experts. Fourthly, it provides for the continuation of the discussion at the next session of the General Assembly in order to choose the path forward on the basis of evidence.

With the effort of all delegations, we now have a proactive consensus text on a new and very relevant issue for the Organization. We have made the General Assembly a guiding force in this cross-cutting process, as it also influences social aspects, human rights and other areas that could affect peace in our societies. As such, we must be able to address this matter in a natural and frank manner, without fear. Avoiding such a discussion will neither reduce the pace of technological development nor alter its impact on the daily lives of people whose well-being is at the heart of United Nations action.

**Mr. Pontiroli** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its member States would like to thank Mexico for its constructive facilitation of the preparation of draft resolution A/72/L.38 and all delegations for their engagement.

We believe that it is important to deepen our understanding of the impact that rapid technological change can have on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We see merit in exploring the opportunities and challenges presented by these technologies, fully engaging all stakeholders, and we welcome the commitment by Mexico and other participants to avoid politicization of this topic. In this regard, we anticipate with appreciation the adoption today of the draft resolution on the impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We look forward to the findings of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the consideration by the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Taking note of these discussions, the European Union and its member States believe that the discussion of this topic should continue in the appropriate existing forums — the Technology Facilitation Mechanism; the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals; and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development — including with a view to avoiding any duplication. That position is in line with our broader goal of strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly, including by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its work.

**Ms. Iiguni-Kanda** (Japan): Science, technology and innovation are essential elements for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and we recognize the value of holding such discussions here at the United Nations. We believe, however, that the agenda items and frameworks on science, technology and innovation, including rapid technological change, must be streamlined. It should be noted that we already have two agenda items on technology under the Second Committee, while the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development serve as platforms for discussions to share knowledge and experiences.

To avoid duplication with the existing frameworks, we reached consensus to hold a session on rapid technological change within the science, technology and innovation forum, instead of establishing a new expert group, as originally proposed in paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/72/L.38. Furthermore, it is our expectation that the discussion of rapid technological

change will be promoted under the initiative of the Technological Facilitation Mechanism, including the inter-agency task team, the 10-member group and the science, technology and innovation forum. The forum, including the session suggested in paragraph 4, will be planned and managed, in close consultation with Member States, by the co-Chair.

Finally, it is the understanding of all Member States involved, including Japan, that the session on the impact of rapid technological change mentioned in paragraph 4 will be held on the condition that additional budgetary resources are earmarked for the session.

**Ms. Christian** (United States of America): While we will join the consensus on draft resolution A/72/L.38, we take this opportunity to clarify important points.

The United States looks forward to discussing the issue of rapid technological change on sustainable development within appropriate forums, including the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development. However, we do not believe these issues deserve a separate track within the General Assembly.

We join consensus on the draft resolution this year but believe that in future these issues can be addressed under existing General Assembly agenda items, particularly item 21 (b), "Globalization and interdependence: science, technology and innovation for development". Further, we understand that paragraph 5 does not add this specific issue to the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, and that any further consideration of this issue will be under existing agenda items.

The United States disassociates itself from the sixth preambular paragraph to the extent that references to prior United Nations proposals or calls for access to technology promote technology transfer or the distribution of intellectual property rights that is not on mutually agreed terms and voluntary. For the United States, any such language will have no standing in future negotiations. The United States continues to oppose language that we believe undermines intellectual property rights.

**Mrs. Furman** (Israel): At the outset, I wish to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Mexico and all our friends at the Mexican Mission on the

forthcoming adoption of draft resolution A/72/L.38, on the impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Israel is proud to sponsor the draft resolution because we believe that technological progress, when used properly, can help us find solutions to environmental problems, fight hunger and poverty, find cures for disease and achieve the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We are at the dawn of a new era that will change the world. Rapid advances in technology are making the world more accessible and enabling us to do things that were impossible just a few years ago. Today technology affects every aspect of our lives, and it is up to us to make sure that we use technology to make a positive difference to help transform the world into a better place.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/72/L.38, entitled "Impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Ms. De Miranda** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/72/L.38, the following countries have become sponsors: Armenia, Australia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Mauritius, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Tunisia and Ukraine.

**The President:** May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/72/L.38?

*Draft resolution A/72/L.38 was adopted (resolution 72/242).*

**The President:** May I take it that the Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of agenda item 177?

*It was so decided.*



**Agenda item 65 (continued)****Peacebuilding and sustaining peace****Draft resolution (A/72/L.39)**

**The President:** I should like to remind members that the General Assembly will hold a debate on this item, jointly with agenda items 30, “Report of the Peacebuilding Commission”, and 111, entitled “Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund”, during the resumed part of the seventy-second session, next year.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ghana to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.39.

**Mrs. Pobee (Ghana):** I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States under the agenda item “Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace” and to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.39, entitled “Nelson Mandela Peace Summit”.

The year 2018 will mark the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela, which is a major milestone worthy of commemoration considering that global icon’s contribution to history and his legacy for future generations. The life of Nelson Mandela was informed by his selfless commitment and deep sense of duty not only to his own country, South Africa, and to his continent, Africa, but to humankind as a whole. His legacy includes having ushered South Africa out of the insidious and inhumane institutional system of apartheid and strengthened the unity of the country to avoid a civil war and ensure a peaceful transition to democracy.

As part of the commemoration of the centenary of his birth and to benefit from his legacy, the African Group presents for the consideration of the members of the General Assembly a draft resolution proposing a summit on peace. That summit, it is envisaged, would be an official United Nations event, to be held on the eve of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, in September 2018. It is proposed that the summit take place under the theme “Building on Nelson Mandela’s legacy to strengthen the United Nations in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security”.

We recall that in his first-ever address to the General Assembly (see A/46/PV.59), shortly after his release from prison in 1991, President Mandela made reference to the historic role of the United Nations as

peacemaker and called on the Organization to resolve outstanding conflict. Thus the summit would take place in the context of reflecting on the United Nations as an institution which, as enshrined in Article 1 of the Charter, aims to maintain international peace and security and, to that end, to take effective collected measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace.

The centenary of Nelson Mandela thus presents an opportunity for world leaders together at the peace summit and, applying the ideals and values exposed by the former statesman, recommit to the nations of the world to preventing conflict, achieving sustained peace, promoting human rights and ensuring development for all. As Nelson Mandela stated in his address to the General Assembly on 3 December 1991, the United Nations creates the possibility for each to have a meaningful say in how we should live together in one peaceful, stable, prosperous and free world.

We urge all members of the General Assembly unanimously to support the adoption of the draft resolution so as to ensure that the commemoration is a truly global tribute that has the full support of the entire membership of the United Nations.

**The President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/72/L.39.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Ms. De Miranda (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management):** I am delivering the following oral statement in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/72/L.39, the General Assembly would decide to convene a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, to be known as the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit, a day before the start of the general debate at the seventy-third session, which will consist of an opening plenary meeting from 9.30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and a plenary meeting from 10.30 a.m. to 6 p.m., focusing on global peace in honour of the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela.

With regard to the request contained in a paragraph 1, it should be noted that should a list of speakers not be completed by 6 p.m., the meeting would either be closed or any extensions of the meeting beyond 6 p.m. would entail additional costs for the Department for

General Assembly and Conference Management for the 2018-2019 budget period, which is not yet approved. Accordingly, the adoption of draft resolution A/72/L.39 would not give rise to any budgetary implications under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

Copies of the statement that I have just read out have been distributed desk-to-desk in the Hall and will also be made available on the PaperSmart portal.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Ghana on a point of order.

**Mrs. Pobee** (Ghana): I wish to make the following oral revision to the draft text. It consists of a footnote to paragraph 8 of the draft resolution, to read as follows:

“The list of proposals as well as final names will be brought to the attention of the General Assembly. Where a name is objected to, the objecting member State will on a voluntary basis make known to the Office of the President of the General Assembly the general basis of its objections and the Office will share any information received with any member State upon its request”.

**The President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/72/L.39, entitled “Nelson Mandela Peace Summit”, as orally revised.

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

**Ms. De Miranda** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in draft resolution A/72/L.39, the following countries have just indicated their wish to become sponsors: the Gambia, Ireland, Senegal and Thailand.

**The President:** May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/72/L.39, as orally revised?

*Draft resolution A/72/L.39, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 72/243).*

**The President:** I give the floor to the representative of Israel in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

**Mrs. Furman** (Israel): Israel joined the consensus on resolution 72/243, given the importance of Nelson Mandela’s legacy. However, we regret that although we were actively engaged in the informal consultations on the resolution, the concerns we raised were not taken into account.

**The President:** The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 65.

### Programme of work

**The President:** I would like to draw the attention of members to the date of recess of the current session. Members will recall that at its 59th plenary meeting, on 29 November 2017, the General Assembly decided that the seventy-second session would recess on Friday, 22 December 2017. However, in view of the work that remains to be completed for this part of the session, I would like to propose to the Assembly that it postpone the date of recess to Saturday, 23 December 2017.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to postpone the date of recess to Saturday, 23 December 2017?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** I should also like to consult members regarding an extension of the work of the Fifth Committee. Members will recall that, at its 59th plenary meeting, on 29 November 2017, the General Assembly agreed to extend the work of the Fifth Committee until Friday, 22 December 2017. However, I have been informed by the Chair of the Fifth Committee that the Committee requests an extension of its work to Saturday, 23 December 2017, as such an extension would facilitate reaching consensus on the pending resolutions before it. May I therefore take it that the General Assembly agrees to extend the work of the Fifth Committee until Saturday, 23 December 2017?

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.*