



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

**31**<sup>st</sup> plenary meeting  
Friday, 2 November 2018, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Arrocha Ruíz (Panama), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

## Agenda item 69

### Report of the Human Rights Council

#### Report of the Human Rights Council (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1)

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): In connection with this item, I would recall that the General Assembly decided, at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2018, to consider agenda item 69 in plenary meeting and in the Third Committee, pursuant to resolution 65/281, of 17 June 2011.

I shall now make a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

“I welcome the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Vojislav Šuc, who will present the report of the Human Rights Council contained in documents A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1 to the General Assembly.

“I take this opportunity to highlight the remarkable efforts of Ambassador Šuc to improve the working methods of the Council.

“Upon assuming the presidency of the General Assembly, I insisted on the importance of making the United Nations more relevant to all people. In order to achieve that goal, the work of the

Human Rights Council is vital. Since its creation as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council continually contributes, through its various mechanisms, procedures and resolutions, to the development of international human rights law.

“Furthermore, it undertakes essential work on the human rights situation around the world. In that regard, I highlight the Universal Periodic Review as a key mechanism for observing the progress and challenges in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all countries.

“The protection of human rights is indispensable, if we want to achieve the main goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, namely, to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions. In that regard, the work of the Human Rights Council contributes to the efforts of the General Assembly towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda and our aim to leave no one behind. We must continue with our efforts to improve coordination and synergy between the various bodies and mechanisms of the United Nations system, avoiding any duplication or overlapping of work.

“In December, the General Assembly will convene two plenary meetings to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries; and the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on the

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Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

“Those events offer a unique opportunity to convey to the world a clear message about the importance of strengthening the human rights system of the Organization, including the Human Rights Council, and to reaffirm that all people, without discrimination, should be protected in their dignity and their rights.”

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/281, I now give the floor to His Excellency Vojislav Šuc, President of the Human Rights Council.

**Mr. Šuc** (President, Human Rights Council): It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to present the annual report of the Human Rights Council (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1) today. I would like to begin by congratulating the 18 newly elected members of the Human Rights Council. I have full confidence that all members will work hard to uphold the promotion and protection of human rights around the world and at home.

This year we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That celebration provides an opportunity for all of us to review how much we have accomplished, where we stand and what should be our way forward. The times are challenging, and our response to those challenges should be resolute. That also gives us the opportunity to assess whether the fundamental role that human rights play within the United Nations system has been sufficiently upheld by the international community and how we can reinforce that role in future. Bearing that in mind, we cannot but recognize that the Human Rights Council has played, in its 12 years of existence, a central role in addressing human rights violations on a global scale.

It has established well-functioning mechanisms through which it shares information and investigates and provides recommendations on a variety of human rights issues, from civil and political to economic, social and cultural rights. It plays an important role in raising early warnings for looming crises. Through technical assistance and cooperation, it helps build resilience and stability within our societies.

This year’s work of the Human Rights Council has been summarized in the report before the Assembly, which lists the activities of as well as the resolutions, decisions and President’s statements adopted by the Council at its three regular sessions, as well as at two special sessions, held in December 2017 and May 2018, respectively.

Since December 2017, the Council has adopted 87 resolutions, of which 53 were adopted without a vote. Some of the resolutions represented cross-regional initiatives, including those on country-specific issues. That has reaffirmed the capacity of the Council to take action on important human rights issues by overcoming differing political positions.

One such example is resolution 39/2, adopted in September, on the situation of the human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar. In the light of the findings of the Independent International Fact-finding Mission on Myanmar, the Council decided to establish an independent mechanism to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law, as well as to prepare for independent criminal proceedings.

Syria has continued to be high on the agenda of the Council throughout the year, and the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic has been extended for another year. The Council has also considered the reports of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi and decided to extend its mandate in order for it to deepen its investigations. Regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Council heard the report of the High Commissioner on the findings of the team of international experts on the situation in the Kasai regions. The Council considered the update and the report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, which is mandated to monitor the human rights situation there.

In September, the Council considered the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights containing the findings of a group of eminent international and regional experts with knowledge of human rights law and the context of Yemen. The report found that individuals in the Government of Yemen — both from among coalition members and the de facto authorities — had committed acts that may have amounted to international crimes. In the light of those findings, the Council decided to extend

the mandate of the group of eminent international and regional experts for another year.

In May, the Council held a special session on the deteriorating human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. It decided to dispatch a commission of inquiry to investigate all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the context of large-scale civilian protests. During the September session, the Council heard an oral update from that commission. In 2018, the Council extended the country-specific special-procedure mandates regarding Belarus, the Central African Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia and the Sudan.

Cooperation and collaboration have been at the forefront of our efforts in the Human Rights Council. While we strive to create an atmosphere conducive to constructive dialogue and cooperation, we have also spent considerable time discussing the need for better cooperation within the United Nations system, as well as how to bridge the disconnect between the three pillars of the United Nations.

The Council has therefore continued to promote the nexus between human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals, which was given more prominence this year through the adoption of three resolutions. In that regard, the Council reaffirmed the central role of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and decided to invite the President of the Economic and Social Council to brief the Human Rights Council, on an annual basis, on discussions in the forum. The current President of the Economic and Social Council addressed the Human Rights Council during the September session. Moreover, the Council requested the High Commissioner to organize two one-day intersessional meetings for dialogue and cooperation on human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as to promote human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals through transparent, accountable and efficient public-service administrations.

In June, the Council adopted a resolution on the contribution that it can make to the prevention of human rights violations. It decided to convene two intersessional seminars and to establish a group consisting of a Chair-rapporteur and two rapporteurs, who will consult relevant stakeholders in Geneva and New York and present proposals on how the Council

can effectively contribute to prevention. Among the thematic resolutions adopted by the Council this year were also resolutions on the joint commitment to countering the world drug problem as it relates to human rights and on promoting mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of human rights.

Lastly, following six years of negotiations in an open-ended intergovernmental working group, in September the Council adopted the text of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (A/HRC/RES/39/12).

This year, the Council held 13 panel discussions on various thematic human rights issues. In particular, it commemorated the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. We also marked the seventieth anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In April, the Council held a high-level intersessional discussion celebrating the centenary of Nelson Mandela.

This year's high-level panel discussion on human rights, which involved streaming with the heads and senior officials of United Nations agencies, focused on the promotion and protection of human rights in the light of the Universal Periodic Review. The Council was honoured to have the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, as a participant in that discussion and would be honoured to have the current President of the General Assembly at the Council's fortieth session, to be held from 25 February 2019.

I am also pleased to inform the Assembly that we have continued to make the work of the Council accessible to persons with disabilities. During the three regular sessions this year, six panels were made accessible through the provision of international sign language interpretation, real-time captioning and the webcast of these services. I also wish to highlight that, early this year, the Council launched its new user-friendly website, which offers numerous improvements and should ease navigation through the Council pages.

I wish to take this opportunity to emphasize that the special procedures of the Human Rights Council not only provide one of the main sources of up-to-date, reliable information on human rights issues and a solid basis for the dialogues and debates at the Council, but could also significantly contribute to the early warning and prevention efforts of the United Nations. It is therefore

very important for all countries to cooperate and give access to the special-procedure mandate holders.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that, as of September, 118 member States and one Observer State had extended a standing invitation to thematic special procedures. However, I am concerned by the position of some States to cooperate only with a select few Council mechanisms, or not to cooperate at all. I therefore call upon all States that have not yet done so to issue standing invitations to all special-procedure mandate holders and to cooperate with them fully.

Allow me now to turn to the Universal Periodic Review, which is now well into its third cycle and continues to celebrate a 100 per cent participation rate. It enjoys strong legitimacy and ownership by Member States and is often cited as one of the Council's greatest achievements. It provides a constructive forum for a non-politicized, non-selective and non-confrontational discussion among peers. The Universal Periodic Review process provides space, not only for States, but also for the active contribution of regional and national human rights mechanisms, civil society and, more recently, parliaments. The reviews in the third cycle were marked by a high, predominantly ministerial, level of representation in the delegations of the States under review. The third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review is focused on the implementation of and follow-up to previous recommendations received and accepted by each State.

This year, with the continuous and increasing support of States, the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the Work of the Human Rights Council enabled the participation of 25 representatives in its regular sessions. Among those Government officials, 10 were from Africa, five were from Latin America and the Caribbean, and 10 were from Asia and the Pacific. Furthermore, 14 of them were women, and six represented small island developing States that do not have permanent representation in Geneva, namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Marshall Islands, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu.

The active participation of civil society and national human rights institutions is essential to the work of the Human Rights Council, making the Council unique among other United Nations intergovernmental organs. In addition to providing us with first-hand information

from the ground, injecting unique perspectives into our discussions and drawing our attention to urgent human rights situations, civil-society organizations play a fundamental role in follow-up and capacity-building efforts in their home countries. Regrettably, however, in the course of this year, I have continued to receive allegations of intimidation, threats and reprisals against individuals who cooperate with the Human Rights Council. I have repeatedly appealed to the Council to ensure the safe participation of civil society in our work and, when necessary, I have followed up directly with the States concerned. It is critical that the Council remain a safe and inclusive environment where representatives of civil society can freely express their views on the situations of human rights around the world.

Let me now turn to the issues that directly touch upon the work of the General Assembly. This year the Human Rights Council adopted several resolutions with recommendations made to the General Assembly. Through its resolution 37/29, adopted in March on the human rights situation in Syria, the Council recommended that the General Assembly submit the reports of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic to the Security Council for appropriate action.

In its resolution 37/37, on ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, also adopted in March, the Council recommended that the General Assembly remain informed of the matter.

Concerning the situation of the human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar, the Council encouraged the General Assembly to consider taking further action to address the serious human rights violations in Myanmar, particularly in Rakhine, Shan and Kachin states. It also encouraged the General Assembly to consider the recommendations of the report of the Independent International Fact-finding Mission on Myanmar and to give due regard to the establishment of the new independent mechanism.

At its September session, the Council recommended that the General Assembly adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas.

Finally, in its resolution 39/13, adopted in September on human rights and indigenous people, the Council decided to hold a half-day intersessional interactive dialogue on ways to enhance the participation of the



representatives of indigenous peoples in the Council's meeting and invited the President of the General Assembly to participate. The Council recommended that the General Assembly consider the summary report of that interactive dialogue as well.

Before concluding, I would like to share some thoughts on the Council's work. In the 12 years since its creation, the Human Rights Council has established itself as the principal intergovernmental body for the promotion and protection of human rights. It is a well-functioning body. It provides an invaluable platform where a wide range of views on difficult human rights issues can be heard and common solutions to human rights questions around the world can be found.

This year, I have been privileged to have a first-hand experience of the Human Rights Council in action, and sometimes I have seen the fracturing world that we are witnessing today playing out in our work. But what is more important, and for me inspiring, is that I have also seen a number of delegations coming together in the spirit of compromise and cooperation for the benefit of human rights. The Council has many good stories to tell, but as is the case with everything in this imperfect world, it also has its fair share of shortcomings. The efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's work seems to be the most pressing one and has been at the forefront of our agenda for some time now. Together with the Bureau of the Council I have initiated a process guided by our co-facilitators, which through informal open-ended consultations seeks to identify long-term measures that could improve efficiency, strengthen the Council and rationalize its work. The process focuses on three aspects: first, reducing the workload and the number of meeting hours of the Council during its regular sessions; secondly, the rationalization of resolutions and initiatives, and thirdly, the use of modern technology. We have held three rounds of consultations so far and will continue in November with a view to reaching an agreement at the organizational session on 3 December.

This year as well, I have been given a rare opportunity to gain an insider's view of the strengths and weaknesses of the Human Rights Council and, I may say, of the entire United Nations system. While realizing how imperfect the United Nations system can be, I have also become even more convinced that, in this fractured world, it represents our lifeline, protecting us from slipping back into the dark periods of our history.

In conclusion, let me say that I am extremely proud to lead the Human Rights Council this year. It is my sincere desire to see the Council successfully overcome its challenges and come out even stronger so that it can continue improving the lives of the people around the world.

As my term will come to an end in December, I wish to assure the Assembly of my commitment to seeing a successful transition of the presidency and hope that the General Assembly will continue to support the work of the Human Rights Council in the years to come.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank President Šuc for having introduced the report of the Human Rights Council.

**Mr. Gumende** (Mozambique): Allow me at the outset to welcome Ambassador Vojislav Šuc, the current President of the Human Rights Council. The Group of African States would like to thank him for his presentation today of the annual report of the Council (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1) and to congratulate him on his dedicated and tireless efforts during the tenure of his presidency of the Council.

The African Group would like to reaffirm the Council's mandate as a principal United Nations body of the first instance responsible for ensuring universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind and in a fair and equal manner, as enshrined in founding resolution 60/251. The African Group further wishes to reaffirm resolution 65/281, of 17 June 2011, on the review of the Council, by which the Assembly maintained the status of the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. The Group recalls that the Council's mandate should be driven by the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue, free from politicization, selectivity and double standards

Africa remains convinced that the Universal Periodic Review is the sole mechanism for the work of the Human Rights Council in the fulfilment of the human rights obligations of States and the improvement of the situation on the ground. In realizing that objective, the recommendations of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance for the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review must be properly resourced so as to be able to assist States to develop national capacity and expertise.

The Group reaffirms the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the third World Conference on Human Rights, on 25 June 1993. That outcome fundamentally underlines that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and that the right to development is a universal, inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights.

The African Group reaffirms resolution 60/251 in promoting universal respect for the protection of all human rights, including its subsequent institution-building package, which marked the foundation of the Human Rights Council and provided its mandate. The Group stresses that that resolution affirmed the need to respect regional particularities and the various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds, while promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, and therefore condemns the attempts of some States to impose their values in contradiction to the resolution.

In that regard, the Group notes with concern the increasingly non-consensual nature by which Human Rights Council resolutions are adopted. We would point, for example, to Human Rights Council resolution 39/10, entitled “Preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights in humanitarian settings”, which should have been adopted by consensus, but was unfortunately politicized by the inclusion of highly controversial language.

The Group also deplores the lack of constructive engagement by the global North in the work of the intergovernmental working group on transnational companies and other business enterprises and human rights, as the working group seeks to make progress in the negotiations on an internationally and legally binding instrument, as per Human Rights Council resolution 26/9. The mandate of the Human Rights Council can be implemented effectively only if it is applied on the basis of the principles of non-politicization, non-selectivity, objectivity, universality, international cooperation and within the context of a genuine intergovernmental dialogue to address human rights issues, while refraining from targeting human rights situations only in particular countries.

The promotion and protection of human rights and the prevention of human rights violations can be attained through the building of the resilience of societies and through technical cooperation, solidarity and mutual respect. We note the important role of

technical assistance and capacity-building in supporting States’ efforts to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms upon the request of States and based on their needs and priorities.

The process of strengthening the efficiency of the Human Rights Council should be guided by the principles of transparency, inclusiveness and non-discrimination, and should be in conformity with the letter and spirit of the institution-building package of the Human Rights Council. Any agreed measures should be adopted by a consensual decision of the Human Rights Council. All issues on the agenda of that Council should be treated on an equal and non-discriminatory basis.

The African Group reaffirms the universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness and interdependence of all human rights. Civil and political rights, as well economic and social rights, including the right to development, should be addressed in a fair and equitable manner, with the same emphasis and on an equal footing. The African Group reiterates its principled position on the notion of the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights and their progressive realization, which is informed by a recognition that extreme poverty and social exclusion constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent steps are necessary in order to achieve a better knowledge of extreme poverty and its causes, through the realization of the right to development. A troubling aspect of what is going on is the negation of socioeconomic and cultural rights. We do not believe in the hierarchy of rights that seems to underlie the human rights-based approach. We cannot promote one set of rights at the exclusion of others and hope to achieve the inculcation of human rights consciousness everywhere in the world.

The Group would like to reaffirm the mandate of the Third Committee to examine the work of the Human Rights Council through the adoption of its annual report by that Committee. We have noted the growing attempts to undermine that mandate by proposing that the report of the Human Rights Council be submitted to the General Assembly without the endorsement of the Third Committee. The Group therefore wishes to caution against setting such a precedent for the methods of work of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. Any changes to the mandate will require the endorsement of the universal membership, through an inclusive intergovernmental process. To that end, the African Group will continue to present its annual resolution on the adoption of the Human Rights Council report.

In conclusion, the African Group wishes to assure the Assembly of its support and cooperation in leading the Council towards the fulfilment of its mandate.

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

**Ms. Brito Maneira** (European Union): This year we mark the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the seventieth anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights and the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

On this occasion, the European Union would like to pay tribute to the late former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, whose vision informed the creation of the Human Rights Council. He said,

“The cause of human rights has entered a new era. For much of the past 60 years, our focus has been on articulating, codifying and enshrining rights. That effort produced a remarkable framework of laws, standards and mechanisms — the Universal Declaration, the international covenants, and much else. Such work needs to continue in some areas. But the era of declaration is now giving way, as it should, to an era of implementation.”

Kofi Annan has left us in the year of the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela — two giants in the history of humankind, whose legacies should be celebrated together. They embodied the principles of our shared humanity and the universality of the laws, values and principles that we should lean on as the basis of our joint efforts.

The European Union and its member States would like to warmly thank the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Vojislav Šuc, for presenting the Council’s annual report (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1) and for his able stewardship of the work of the Council in 2018, including his efforts to improve its efficiency. The European Union has strongly supported the Human Rights Council and its independence since its establishment and continues to do so.

Twelve years have passed since the General Assembly established the Human Rights Council, and

much has been achieved. The Human Rights Council is adjusting to new realities and delivering on various parts of its mandate. The new High Commissioner for Human Rights delivered her first statement to the Human Rights Council in September, reminding us all that the promotion of human rights is a powerful medicine that heals wounds and develops resilience. The EU stands ready to cooperate closely with her and the Office, as we cooperated with her predecessors.

On 12 October, the General Assembly elected 18 new members of the Council. Serving as a Council member entails important responsibilities. Resolution 60/251 provides that members elected to the Council shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights and shall fully cooperate with the Council. While we congratulate the new members, we also remind them to give due importance to the human rights situation in their own countries and to cooperate with the Council’s mechanisms in the promotion and protection of the human rights of all, without discrimination of any kind.

No State has a perfect human rights record, but we particularly expect from the newly elected members that they will engage in the work of the Human Rights Council in a spirit of self-reflection with a view to improving their own human rights situation and to addressing all human rights concerns that come before the Council on their merits. We also strongly encourage all States and other stakeholders to cooperate with the special procedures as a means to enhance the protection and promotion of human rights. We take this opportunity to call on all States that have not done so to extend a standing invitation to all special procedures.

In 2018, under the able leadership of Ambassador Šuc and thanks to the work of the co-facilitators, the Human Rights Council has recommitted to improving its efficiency. That ongoing process has already produced positive results, including a significant streamlining of the number of resolutions presented and the moving of some thematic resolutions to a biennial or triennial basis. That allows for stronger engagement from all stakeholders, creates more space for dialogue and reinforces ownership.

The EU is firmly committed to the process of strengthening the Council’s efficiency and will continue to engage constructively in an inclusive cross-regional process of reflection, dialogue and review in Geneva and in close partnership with all relevant stakeholders,

including civil society, and focusing on the Council's working methods, efficiency, effectiveness and impact. For the EU, it is crucial to further improve synergies between the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee, while at the same time ensuring that the mandate, independence and work of the Human Rights Council is respected. Moreover, we welcome consistency between the work of the Council, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee, with a view to ensuring that the activities mandated by the Human Rights Council are appropriately funded and can be duly implemented.

The Council's mandate to contribute through dialogue and cooperation to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses and to respond promptly to human rights emergencies must be fully operationalized in order to translate early warning into early action. The Council's existing mechanisms can be better used to play that stronger preventive role, including by transferring reports and other materials to the Security Council when relevant. The EU looks forward to continuing to contribute to the full implementation of the Human Rights Council's wide mandate, given it by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/251, namely, through the new process established by Human Rights Council resolution 38/18 to assess how the Council can better implement its prevention mandate.

During the September session of the Council, the EU delivered a statement supported by Japan, Norway, Turkey, Australia, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Ukraine, Montenegro, Georgia, Albania, Iceland, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, Ghana and Armenia, recalling the rules and established practices of intergovernmental working groups and, inter alia, the responsibility of those who are leading a process to return to the Council for a renewal of its programme of work, in order to ensure that its endeavours and resources reflect, and are accountable to, the democratic will of the members of the Council.

The EU welcomes the strong condemnation by the Human Rights Council of discrimination and gender-based violence against women and girls in all its forms, online and offline, in both public and private spaces. We strongly support the call made to States to develop inclusive gender-responsive policies and regulations, as well as to repeal all laws and policies that exclusively or disproportionately criminalize women's and girls' actions or behaviours and that discriminate against

them, based on any grounds, including custom, tradition or cultural or religious interpretation contrary to the international obligation to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls. We are encouraged by the decisions calling for the mainstreaming of women's and girls' rights into all humanitarian action, as well as efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, and we encourage all development and humanitarian actors to ensure that their operations and actions adhere to the principles of equality and non-discrimination and seek to promote women's and girls' full enjoyment of all human rights across the board.

Civil society and human rights defenders play a crucial and instrumental role in the work of the Council and its mechanisms. Targeting individuals or groups that engage with United Nations human rights mechanisms is unacceptable and runs contrary to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of human rights. The European Union strongly condemns any act of violence, harassment, intimidation, reprisal or threat thereof. The ability of individuals and groups to raise concerns with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Human Rights Council's special procedures and other mechanisms without fear of reprisals is vital for the work of those mechanisms and their capacity to fulfil their mandates. The issue of reprisals needs a consistent approach at the international and regional levels. All States represented in this Hall have an obligation to do all in their power to prevent and eliminate such acts. Civil society and its representatives are valuable partners for States and human right mechanisms and for the enhancement of the universal protection and promotion of human rights.

We underline the vital importance of countering intimidation and reprisals against those seeking to cooperate with the United Nations and its mechanisms and the role that we must all play in ensuring a robust response. We support the mandate and work of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights in that respect and welcome the holding of the first interactive dialogue on that matter within the Council and the sustained efforts that are being made on the issue.

The EU welcomes the central role played by the Human Rights Council in addressing human rights situations throughout the world. In September, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar presented its final report (A/HRC/39/64) to



the Council. The report provides a harrowing account of the human rights situation in Myanmar, pointing to the possible commission of genocide in Rakhine state and containing findings that crimes against humanity have been committed in Kachin, Rakhine and Shan states by the military and security forces. The findings also point to the commission by ethnically based armed organizations of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law.

The EU therefore welcomes the fact that the Human Rights Council acted on its responsibility to adequately address those extremely grave findings and to pursue accountability through its decision to establish a mechanism to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law and to facilitate fair and independent criminal proceedings in national, regional or international courts. The EU is pleased that the mechanism was established through a joint resolution (Human Rights Council resolution 34/22) presented — for the first time in the Council's history — on behalf of the EU and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). We are grateful for the close and very constructive cooperation that we have had with the OIC throughout that process. That is testament to the important results that the Council can achieve when we work together across different regional groups on situations where we share a common concern.

The EU welcomes the renewal of the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi and calls on the Government of Burundi to cooperate fully with the Commission, as well as with other international human rights mechanisms. As stated in the Council's founding resolution, members of the Human Rights Council shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, both domestically and internationally. We reiterate our urgent call on the Government of Burundi to do so, and we condemn all threats against the Commission's members, as well as reprisals against those who cooperate with it.

The severe consequences of the crisis in Syria and the violations committed by all parties, particularly the Syrian regime and its allies, cannot be ignored by any State. Any violations of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, some of which may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity, must be brought to justice. In that context, the Council's ongoing response to the crisis

remains critically important, as demonstrated by efforts to foster accountability and fight against impunity.

The EU welcomes the renewal of the mandate of the eminent international and regional experts to monitor and report on the human rights situation in Yemen and to continue to carry out the comprehensive examination of all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law and other appropriate and applicable fields of international law committed by all parties. We call on all parties to cooperate fully with the investigative mechanism for Yemen.

During the past year, the Human Rights Council has also demonstrated its commitment to provide technical assistance and capacity-building for promoting human rights to the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali, the Sudan, Somalia and the Central African Republic. We also welcome the adoption of a resolution initiated by a group of countries in the region requesting the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to monitor the human rights situation in Venezuela. We furthermore welcome the continued support rendered to Georgia and Ukraine.

The twenty-eighth special session of the Council also clearly indicated that continued attention should be paid to the situation of concern in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. We trust that the Council will continue to closely monitor situations where technical assistance and capacity-building can make a difference and to take action when necessary. The EU calls for unfettered access to all territories to be granted to international human rights monitoring mechanisms.

We welcome the fact that the human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will remain on the Council's agenda, which will ensure close monitoring before, during and after the elections. We also welcome the fact that the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building to the Democratic Republic of the Congo will continue through continued technical support to national investigations and the special mechanism for accountability and justice for crimes committed in the Kasai region. We wish to stress that human rights and fundamental freedoms are key preconditions for ensuring credible, peaceful, transparent and inclusive elections and require the implementation of important steps, including confidence-building measures.

Being a member of the Council increases a country's responsibility to cooperate with its mechanisms and to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights. The EU therefore particularly regrets that any Member State, in particular one that is a member of the Human Rights Council, should try to prevent a Council-mandated briefing by a commission of inquiry, much less make threats or inflammatory statements during such a briefing. As the High Commissioner has said, States Members of the United Nations should show respect to the institutions and the various bodies, laws and mechanisms that the Organization has established.

We also welcome the extension of the country-specific mandates of the Special Rapporteurs on the human rights situations in Myanmar, Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea and Belarus, and the extension of the mandate of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan. Through joint statements, the Council has also addressed the situations in Cambodia, the Philippines, Nicaragua and Maldives.

Human Rights Council mechanisms, including the system of special procedures, the establishment of accountability mechanisms and the Universal Periodic Review, have contributed positively to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. Through its delivery on its technical-assistance and capacity-building mandates, the Council has helped countries deal with human rights crises and build human rights protections policies and fulfil their international obligations.

The mechanisms of the Human Rights Council are strong medicine that can heal wounds and develop resilience. The European Union will continue to do its part in engaging with the mechanisms of the Council and all stakeholders working to promote and protect human rights, including by presenting draft resolutions on the rights of the child, together with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, and on the freedom of religion and belief, as well as on various country situations.

**Mr. Opimah** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Human Rights Council was originally envisaged as a body that would play an important role in the protection and promotion of human rights, based on the principles of constructive cooperation and genuine dialogue. If that were the role actually played by the Council, we

would welcome that role. However, the reality is such that we cannot do so. The proceedings of the Human Rights Council remain excessively politicized and bogged down by initiatives that are not supported by consensus. That situation cannot but undermine trust in the Council, its resolutions and their objectivity.

In the light of that situation, Belarus calls for the greater development of the work of the cooperation mechanisms in the Council and other forms of dialogue, such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The UPR procedure has secured overall support through clear, explicit criteria that apply uniformly to all States. At the same time, country-specific initiatives, which are rubber-stamped by the Council, are based on the subjective views and assessments of certain States or groups of States. The operations of the numerous special procedures established by the Human Rights Council must also be based on cooperation and dialogue with States.

Unfortunately, certain special procedures are biased in their work and subject to external influence. We believe that it is of critical importance to reduce the level of confrontation when a country is the subject of a country-specific consideration. We also believe that it is important to put an end to the practice of including country-specific issues for consideration on the thematic agenda of the Human Rights Council. It is not acceptable that reports on country-specific situations should be drafted by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights without a mandate based on relevant Council resolutions. The Council report before us today (A/73/53 and A/73/53 Add.1) fully reflects the problems that I have mentioned. Since the report lists resolutions that are not acceptable to Belarus, our delegation cannot support that document.

**Mr. Aldahhak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of my country, the Syrian Arab Republic, reiterates its steadfast position, namely, that we reject the politicization of human rights issues and mechanisms and their use as a political tool to serve the interests of certain influential countries in this Organization. They target Member States, including my country, for reasons that have nothing to do with international law, the Charter of the United Nations or human rights instruments and values.

My delegation strongly rejects any efforts to deal with human rights issues using double standards and shameful selectivity that focuses on certain countries

while ignoring the wars of aggression, war crimes, support for terrorism and serious violations of human rights committed by certain Governments of States Members of the Organization. They do so individually at times or in the context of internationally illegal alliances created outside the United Nations. Among such illegal alliances is the illegal alliance led by the United States of America, which has been committing crimes, one after the other, against civilians in my country and destroying civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, dams and bridges without any moral deterrent or fear of being called to account in any way.

Human rights issues are holistic. If we wish to deal with human rights, we must do so with professionalism, credibility, impartiality and avoid shameful practices such as fabrication, antagonism, confrontation, accusations and attempts to isolate others. In that regard, the delegation of my country strongly condemns the pressures brought to bear by certain well-known Governments on human rights mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council, by withdrawing from them or threatening to do so or exerting economic and financial pressures by cutting off funding, with a view to covering up the crimes they commit together with their allies. We also condemn the attempt to interfere with agenda items of the Human Rights Council in a manner that serves the purposes of the Israeli occupation of the Arab occupied territories. My delegation also rejects, attempts to blur the boundary between the mandates of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council in order to serve the special agendas of certain Western States that are permanent members of the Security Council.

My delegation stresses that the crimes and the serious violations of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights instruments that are being committed by the Israeli occupation authorities against the residents of the occupied Syrian Golan and other Arab occupied territories must come to an end. We also call for an immediate end to the crimes of the illegal international coalition operating in my country and its support for terrorism. The illegal coalition has completely destroyed the city of Raqqa, using prohibited weapons against civilians, including white phosphorus. Recently, we found mass graves containing the bodies and remains of more than 4,000 Syrians, most of them children and women, who died because of the acts of aggression perpetrated by that illegal coalition. Of course, those crimes and the crimes

committed by terrorist organizations, along with the practices of States supporting terrorism, do not find their way into the reports of Human Rights Council or the United Nations, given the politicization, selectivity and double standards of the human rights agenda.

Despite the hundreds of letters that we have sent and the claims made by many representatives of States Members of the Organization that they are keen to protect human rights and the rule of law, this situation requires immediate action under the auspices of United Nations, including serious and firm steps to effectively promote the equal treatment of States, international law and the Charter. The seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides a good opportunity to review and reform the situation.

We listened to the statement made earlier by the European Union, which referred to what it termed the human rights situation in my country Syria. In that respect, the delegation of my country reiterates its call on European countries to raise their voice against the Governments that support terrorism. They should not just talk about those issues behind closed doors. That is shameful. People pay in blood for the price of their silence. Firm actions should be taken to end terrorism.

We also call for the lifting of the unilateral economic coercive sanctions imposed on Syrians, which represent a violation of their rights and a collective punishment imposed by Europe and others, which contravenes the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of justice. We call on European countries that participate in the illegal coalition to immediately withdraw from it and to distance themselves from the crimes committed by that coalition and its brutal violations of human rights and Syrian civilians.

The discourse of racism, hate and extremism must be brought to an end, as should the violent practices committed against refugees and migrants, including Syrians. There should be no politicization of humanitarian and development work, which should not be linked with politicized conditions that totally contravene the principles of humanitarian and development work. The efforts of the Syrian Government must be supported in order to help the refugees and migrants attain their goal of returning to their homeland Syria in a safe and dignified manner.

**Mrs. Elmarmuri** (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to extend its thanks

to Mr. Vojislav Šuc, President of the Human Rights Council, for the report presented to the Assembly (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1), of which we have taken note. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Mozambique on behalf of the African Group.

While we stress the importance of solidifying and promoting human rights, we cannot but feel concern at the attempts of some to politicize those values, exploit them for political ends and impose their cultures on other societies. It is necessary to respect the cultural and social diversity existing among peoples. In that respect, my country reaffirms its sovereign right to reject or hold reservations with respect to any international instrument that includes language that goes against our applicable national law. We also reject any attempt to include in resolutions any concepts that do not enjoy consensus among all Member States or do not figure in the relevant international conventions.

When we address human rights concepts, we must address illegal migration and the exploitation and rights violations faced by illegal migrants. That issue has been subject to the attention of numerous States, international and legal organizations. Libya is itself a victim as a transit country for illegal migration. We share the concerns regarding that issue and seek to address the influx of illegal migrants and to prevent smuggler groups from exploiting them, while limiting the risks that such people face when crossing the Sahara, entering Libya and departing by sea for Europe.

My country is among those most affected by illegal migration, especially during this transitional period characterized by weak State institutions and falling export revenues, which have negative effects on our national economy and the State's ability to tackle the challenges of illegal migration, as does another issue related to that crisis, namely, the need to combat terrorism.

My country will spare no effort to cooperate with the relevant international and regional organizations, despite all of the security, financial and political challenges that we are facing. I would like to mention, for example, the ongoing cooperation between Libya and the International Organization for Migration, and the European Union's civilian Border Management Assistance Mission. This year, Libya has signed two cooperation agreements with our neighbouring countries, the Sudan, Chad and the Niger, aimed

at controlling the borders and putting an end to the activities of smuggling groups and terrorist gangs.

At the national level, we have developed a strategy aimed at dealing with the negative effects of illegal migration and at improving the situation of migrants. Out of the 53 accommodation centres, 18 are now closed. We also promote programmes for the voluntary return of refugees to their countries or for their resettlement in a third country.

With regard to saving migrants from drowning in the Mediterranean Sea off the Libyan coast, the Libyan Coast Guard has been working very hard to deal with the situation, including by initiating search and rescue operations, despite its limited capacity. We have been sending out patrols all day long and have set up 10 centres along the Libyan coast that receive migrants who have been rescued at sea. In fact, we have saved thousands of migrants, including women and children.

Despite all my country's efforts, Libya still suffers from the negative consequences of illegal migration, which has affected security and the economy. Libya is experiencing extremely difficult circumstances, exacerbated by the influx of migrants, which burdens the State. As a transit country for illegal migration, Libya is suffering owing to the reluctance of the countries of origin to control their borders, and because the countries of destination have been slow to find radical and effective solutions to address the phenomenon.

The radical solution to illegal migration is to address the reasons that cause people to leave their countries, and not to focus solely on the security dimension. That is a challenge that requires a firm collective international stance aimed at helping poor countries that export migration implement development programmes aimed at improving their living conditions by supporting small and medium-sized businesses and by creating employment opportunities in those countries. We welcome the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, which will be adopted by the intergovernmental conference in Marrakech in the Kingdom of Morocco in December. While we agree on the urgent need to protect the rights of migrants as much as possible, my country believes that the global compact should address the issue of migration in greater depth. We call on the international community, in particular the countries of origin and destination, to work together and shoulder their responsibilities in that regard and not to lay the responsibility on the shoulders



of transit countries such as Libya, which is a victim, not the cause of the problem.

My country emphasizes that the violations that accompany the conflict and post-conflict phases, which are mentioned in the report, are not systematic violations but are perpetrated against illegal migrants and citizens by transnational criminal gangs that take advantage of the difficult transition phase that we in Libya are now in. They cannot be attributed to my Government, which strives to overcome the violations and punish the perpetrators, allowing no impunity. In that regard, the Libyan authorities call for international assistance aimed at overcoming the security crisis in our country by providing the necessary support to our law-enforcement authorities. In that way, they will be able to perform their role and promote security and stability, while controlling the factors and circumstances that lead to violations of international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, my country stresses the importance of respecting, protecting and promoting the human rights enshrined in all of the international instruments to which we are a party. We underscore that the Libyan Government is keen to support comprehensive national reconciliation efforts, while working to achieve security and stability throughout Libya.

**Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein): We thank the President of the Human Rights Council for presenting the comprehensive and informative report on the work of the Human Rights Council (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1).

The Human Rights Council has once again lived up to its role as the central and permanent human rights body of the United Nations. Its developing body of special procedures and mechanisms represent major achievements, as does the Universal Periodic Review, whose integrity and universal nature must be preserved. As a strong supporter of the Human Rights Council, we also see significant room for improvement in a number of areas. As pointed out by other speakers, not all provisions of the Council's founding resolution 60/251 have been implemented in practice. As paragraph 9 of the resolution stipulates, Council members "shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights". That is a political commitment that is binding on the General Assembly membership. States must live up to that responsibility when electing members to the Council. We call on all States to publicly renew that commitment and to

adapt their election practices accordingly. In order to help strengthen the Council's mission and daily work, States that do not fulfil such criteria should not be elected to the Council. Liechtenstein has followed that practice consistently, even in situations where regional groups present clean slates for elections. The consistent implementation of such a policy by others would help to protect the Council from political attack and enhance its effectiveness in its daily work.

Liechtenstein supports calls for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Council and for efforts to review its working methods and priority-setting. Going forward, the Council should build on the experience and best practices of the entire United Nations system. It should draw on resolution 60/251 and resolution 65/281, on the review of the Human Rights Council. The understandings reached by the broadest possible consensus among Member States in those processes must be preserved, in particular in the area of the institutional relationship with the Assembly.

Our long-standing concerns about the situation in Myanmar have found their tragic and full-scale expression in the report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission established by the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/39/64). Consistent patterns of serious human rights violations and abuses, in addition to serious violations of international humanitarian law, rape and other forms of sexual violence, were perpetrated on a massive scale and as the result of what appears to be a policy by the authorities. In the light of the pervasive culture of impunity at the national level, the Mission finds that the impetus for accountability must come from the international community. It recommends that those responsible should be investigated and prosecuted for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. We commend the clear stance of the Fact-Finding Mission that such crimes should be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) as the permanent court dedicated to dealing with the most serious crimes under international law.

We welcome the decision of the Human Rights Council, adopted by an overwhelming majority, to establish an independent mechanism to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law committed in Myanmar since 2011, and to prepare a dossier in order to facilitate and expedite criminal proceedings. We applaud the fact that the Council has adopted that recent and innovative

format so as to advance justice, and we encourage close cooperation and the use of best practices in setting up the mechanism. In addition, we continue to believe that the Security Council should refer the situation to the ICC. However, in the absence of such a referral, which is, unfortunately, likely to be the case, States have other options available to them. The finding of the Court's Pre-Trial Chamber that the Prosecutor can exercise jurisdiction over the crime of the forced deportation of the Rohingya to Bangladesh opens a direct path to justice through a referral by States parties to the Rome Statute under article 14. We also welcome that fact that the Security Council has been briefed on the findings of the Fact-Finding Mission — a first small step in reversing the denial of the reality in the Security Council.

Human rights defenders and civil society play an important and legitimate role in promoting and advocating the realization of all human rights at the local, national, regional and international levels. They engage with Governments and contribute to efforts to implement the obligations and commitments of States. We are glad that the Liechtenstein National Human Rights Institution, established in accordance with the Paris Principles relating to the status of national human rights institutions, is now fully functional and contributes to awareness-raising, public discourse and the respect of human rights.

We are deeply concerned about the considerable increase in the number of threats, acts of intimidation and harassment and attacks against individuals, groups and associations that contribute to the effective elimination of all violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of peoples and individuals. We strongly condemn reprisals against human rights defenders in retaliation for their engagement with international and regional human rights systems, and we are deeply concerned about the increasing number of assaults against journalists, including their arbitrary imprisonment and killing. Promoting the safety of journalists and combating impunity for those who attack them must be a priority for each and every Member State and a central element of the work of the United Nations.

**Ms. Alsabah** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to congratulate Ms. Michelle Bachelet on her appointment as High Commissioner for Human Rights, wishing her every success. We also pay tribute to her predecessor, Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, for his work to promote human rights during his mandate.

Given the egregious violations of human rights resulting from the many bloody conflicts and disputes that we are witnessing around the world, item 69 of the agenda is a priority that requires close follow-up, in particular as we are commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year.

The State of Kuwait thanks the Human Rights Council for its important report (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1). We encourage constructive partnership and cooperation with a view to strengthening the promotion and maintenance of human rights and ensuring respect for the choice of the principles and values that are in harmony with specific societies. At the same time, we reject any attempt to impose any cultures or principles on peoples under the pretext of human rights, and we call for the equality of all rights: political, economic, social, cultural and development-related. My country recognizes the challenges and struggles facing the international community with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with all relevant international instruments and charters. We also believe in the right of each person to development, employment, food, medical care, education and gender equality, none of which will ever be realized in isolation from the achievement of international peace and security.

As part of its commitment to human rights, the State of Kuwait has created several relevant national institutions and mechanisms, including the National Anti-Corruption Authority, the Women's Commission of the Council of Ministers, the Human Rights Committee of the National Assembly, the National Bureau for Human Rights, and the General Authority for Disability Affairs, among others. I should also mention that the Kuwaiti Constitution provides for respect for the dignity and rights of people. In that same vein, we have endorsed a number of International Labour Organization conventions.

The State of Kuwait strongly condemns all violations and abuses of human rights, as well as all violations of international law by all parties to conflicts throughout the world. We also strongly condemn attacks that deliberately target civilians or promote child recruitment, sexual and ethnic violence, murder and mutilation. We also condemn the targeting of houses, schools, hospitals, places of worship and infrastructure by any party to a conflict.

The State of Kuwait stresses that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interrelated. That is why we reiterate our support for the promotion of international cooperation aimed at preventing organized acts of the looting and smuggling of cultural property and the illicit trafficking thereof. Given the foregoing, my country is a member of the Board of the Foundation of the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas. We commend the Security Council resolution 2347 (2017) regarding the preservation of cultural heritage in areas of armed conflict. We also pay tribute to the role played by the Human Rights Council in its endeavours to protect and preserve cultural heritage.

The State of Kuwait is committed to implementing the recommendations emanating from the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, and is determined to promote cooperation with the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms. In that regard, we will receive the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities by the end of November.

The State of Kuwait pays tribute to the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar for its report (A/HRC/39/64) and findings regarding the violations committed there and commends the Mission's briefing to the Security Council last week (see S/PV.8381). That is an important step in the right direction for accountability. We expect the Council to uphold its mandate in that regard.

My country strongly condemns the gross violations committed by the Israeli Defense Forces against the human rights of the Palestinian people, Israel's defiance of the relevant Security Council resolutions and its continued occupation of the Palestinian territories. In that regard, we welcome Human Rights Council resolution S-28/1, condemning violations committed by Israel against international law in the context of large-scale civilian protests in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Council's call for an international independent investigation.

In conclusion, my country is currently preparing our third national report within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism in 2019. We attach special importance to the promotion and protection of human rights, and we urge everyone to respect the principles contained in the relevant international instruments and charters. We call upon the international community to join efforts to hold more

constructive discussions and promote cooperation with one another.

**Mr. Skoknic Tapia (Chile)** (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation thanks the President of the Human Rights Council, Mr. Vojislav Šuc, for the presentation of the Council's report (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1), which gives us an accurate description of the vital work of the Council aimed at promoting and protecting human rights around the world.

Chile recognizes the Human Rights Council as the main body within the United Nations system for cooperation, dialogue and the building of consensus on the fundamental pillar that human rights represents. We know that consensus on important and sensitive issues is not easy to attain, even more so when multiple actors meet within that body — from States to civil society and from international organizations to individuals — in the quest for common ground on which to build agreements that allow for the protection of human beings and their rights around the world. That multiplicity, in any event, is also one of the Council's greatest strengths.

Since its inception in 2006, the Human Rights Council has worked to promote and protect the rights of people throughout the world and sought to respond to and alleviate the needs of the victims of rights violations and abuses. That work must be strengthened and promoted. Today more than ever, the work of the Council — including its decisions, special procedures and investigative mechanisms — must be respected by States and protected by the international community, in accordance with our global goals for 2030. Furthermore, those States whose human rights situations receive the attention of the Council and its procedures must be respectful of the Council's work and fully facilitate the implementation of the decisions of that body.

We note with disappointment the humanitarian and human rights crises around the world, which are reflected in the hundreds of resolutions, decisions and special procedures of the Council at this year's meetings. The immense workload of the Council, which is an unfortunate correlate of the multiple crises, is a challenge that must be addressed by the international community, starting with the expert community in Geneva. In that city, which is home to comprehensive international protection mechanisms, the best ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council must be discussed and analysed in a transparent and inclusive manner together with all the interested

parties. That must include civil-society groups and the proposals that they submit.

Chile will participate and support the Council improvement process, whether as one of the current Vice-Presidents of that body or as a State interested in the progress of the international human rights architecture. We thank the Government of Slovenia and the President of the Human Rights Council for the opportunity to analyse in depth the path towards the improvement of that body looking towards 2021, during the Human Rights Council retreat in Ljubljana that took place a few weeks ago. From that meeting, my country was able to conclude that, as 2021 approaches, the Council will benefit by showing itself to be a strong, vibrant and essential body that is indispensable to the United Nations system.

We are convinced that it is our responsibility to strengthen the Council, in the context of a community facing global issues in need of global solutions. That responsibility is particularly important in the framework of the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration is a guide that inspires us to continue working to ensure that all people can achieve their freedom, equality and dignity without any distinction, at all times and in all places.

I should like to conclude by reiterating that my country will continue to work to ensure that the Human Rights Council remains the competent multilateral authority for the promotion and protection of human rights in the United Nations system.

**Ms. Bavdaž Kuret** (Slovenia): At the outset, let me say that Slovenia fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union. I would like to make additional comments in my national capacity.

At the end of this year, Slovenia will have completed its second term in the Human Rights Council. Let me therefore use this opportunity for some of our reflections. Human rights have been the cornerstone of Slovenian foreign policy since our independence in 1991. Through our experience in past years, we recognize human rights as one of the main fields where Slovenia can constructively and progressively contribute to further positive developments in the wider international sphere. We firmly believe that there is a strong interlinkage between peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. The first two cannot be achieved without stringent respect for the latter. Slovenia

supports the principles of the universality, indivisibility, inalienability and interdependence of human rights for all, irrespective of any personal circumstances.

The Human Rights Council is the principal body in the United Nations system for dealing with all human rights issues. Slovenia has been actively engaged in the Council's work since its creation in 2006. It has been an honour to serve a second term in that key global forum for human rights and fundamental freedoms for the past three years, and we are looking forward to our next membership. Until then we will remain a proactive observer State.

I wish to reiterate that Slovenia attaches great importance to the work and mandate of the Council, which works well and has a good story to tell. It is truly a much-needed voice for human dignity and human rights. Over the past decade the Council has brought about immense progress in the promotion and protection of human rights around the world; however, it can and should do more and better. Let us not forget that the Council bears the heavy responsibility of responding effectively to human rights challenges worldwide.

My country therefore firmly believes that we should intensify our efforts to increase the Council's ability to implement the commitments that Member States make in Geneva on the ground. With human rights challenges present around the globe today, it is of utmost importance to find new and innovative ways to translate the actions taken in room XX of the Palais des Nations in Geneva to the ground. Let me remind the Assembly of the important progress that we have achieved with the Universal Periodic Review, one of the most treasured success stories of the United Nations, and we continue to work out how to achieve something similar with other mechanisms.

During our term, we have listened carefully to those who have expressed concerns about the work of the Council. As in any other United Nations body, there is room for further improvement. We should strive for a more systematic inclusion of the human rights dimension in conflict prevention and for closer cooperation between New York and Geneva. We look forward to fruitful discussions as we prepare for the next official review of the Human Rights Council in 2021. As human rights remains one of the three fundamental pillars of the United Nations, we should understand and use the Human Rights Council accordingly.



We believe in the Council's ability to address its own challenges, and we wish to commend the current Council President, Ambassador Vojislav Šuc, for his dedication and efforts to build a more effective and efficient body. Slovenia strongly supports the ongoing work of the Council's Bureau aimed at increasing efficiency and improving methods of work. We believe that the efforts of the current Bureau will lead to a more efficient, effective and therefore stronger Human Rights Council. Slovenia is ready to support the continuation of the ongoing efforts to enhance the Human Rights Council, increase its efficiency and improve its working methods.

As the new High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Bachelet, said at the latest session of the Council,

“[U]pholding human rights is in the interest of every State. Your peoples seek a common agenda: rights, sustainable development and peace. We can only progress towards that vision together. If we undermine multilateral institutions such as this one, we will fail to meet the challenges that our people face”.

On that basis, Slovenia will continue to engage in the work of the Council in our future capacity as an observer State. We will also engage constructively in discussions on how to improve the Council, its work and its impact on the ground in coming years.

**Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): The Islamic Republic of Iran takes note of the report of the Human Rights Council, as contained in document A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1. We also take note of the statement made by the President of the Human Rights Council, Mr. Vojislav Šuc, and would like to thank him for his work as President of the Council.

At a time when racism, assaults on multilateralism, nationalist populism, extreme supremacist ideologies and bigotry show no sign of abating, Iran highlights the work of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office, within their respective mandates. In our view, the Office has yet to be fully utilized as a medium for dialogue and cooperation. Regarding the work of the Council, it is unfortunate that politicization and manipulation have increased mistrust and eroded the effectiveness of the Council and its Universal Periodic Review mechanism. The initial idea behind the Universal Periodic Review mechanism was to ensure universality, objectivity, non-selectivity and impartiality in the work of the Council, as was also noted earlier by Mr. Šuc

in his remarks. Regrettably, some countries still prefer to revert to the dysfunctional practice of submitting country-specific resolutions, which serve only to increase confrontation in the Council.

As a product of the unconstructive initiatives undertaken by some countries, the report of the Council includes a reference to resolution 37/30, which was adopted against my country. The resolution is one of those cases that exposes the shortcomings of the Council. It is nothing but a reflection of the short-sighted political interests of its sponsors, as well as a waste of limited resources that could otherwise be utilized for the meaningful promotion and protection of human rights. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic of Iran disassociates itself from that part of the report of the Human Rights Council. At the same time, we reiterate our position of the non-recognition of and non-cooperation with the mandates that have been created by the Council outside the sphere of internationally recognized human rights mechanisms.

My delegation recognizes the importance of strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council within the framework of the institution-building texts attached to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21. Within that framework, my delegation underlines the importance of maintaining the current structure of the Human Rights Council agenda, in particular standing agenda item 7.

We welcome the idea of reducing the duration of the Human Rights Council panel discussions from three to two hours. We also welcome the decision taken by consensus in the Human Rights Council to hold the 2019 panel discussion on mainstreaming human rights under the title “Human rights in the light of multilateralism: opportunities, challenges and the way forward”. The title could not be timelier.

Meanwhile, my delegation views unfavourably the ideas proposed in the framework of efforts to increase the effectiveness of the Council that entail changes to the structure of the Universal Periodic Review. They include a suggestion to dispense with the adoption of the final outcome report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. We also disagree with any reduction in the time allocated for a State's right of reply. In our view, any modification or decision concerning the Universal Periodic Review has to be taken within the framework of the existing institution-building documents and the relevant rules of procedure.

Also on the issue of the rationalization of Human Rights Council resolutions, my delegation underscores the importance of the institution-building package. Follow-up measures by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should also be conducted in a balanced, fair and equal manner.

In conclusion, my delegation stresses the importance of further cooperation and interaction between the Human Rights Council, the Third Committee and the General Assembly with a view to improving effectiveness and enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights in a cooperative and dialogue-based manner.

**Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Vojislav Šuc, President of the Human Rights Council, for his presentation of the Council's report (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1).

I also take this opportunity to stress the importance of the mandate of the Human Rights Council, especially given the increasing challenges faced by our world today in terms of the rise in the number of armed conflicts, acts of terrorism, violent extremism and discrimination. Those challenges have caused suffering and poverty, in addition to unprecedented flows of migrants throughout the world, with clear impacts on human rights at the social, economic, civil and cultural levels.

The State of Qatar has been implementing a policy of international cooperation whereby it can contribute effectively to international efforts to promote and protect human rights, either by participating effectively in the relevant international agencies or by providing the necessary resources to support the work of the United Nations bodies and mechanisms concerned with human rights and cooperate with them. For example, the State of Qatar hosts the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region. We have also adopted an open-door policy for receiving the mandate holders of the Council mechanisms.

Through its membership in the Human Rights Council, the State of Qatar is keen on participating effectively and cooperating constructively with other member States so as to enable the Human Rights Council to uphold its mandate in the best way, guided by the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. We continue to abide by our pledges and our effective contribution to Human Rights Council efforts aimed at strengthening respect for human rights

and rapidly addressing human rights violations, as well as strengthening accountability for human rights violations and putting an end to impunity.

The wise leadership of the State of Qatar has great interest in the promotion and protection of human rights. It works tirelessly to build a State and a society where the dignity and freedom of the people are protected. That is in accordance with the Qatari Constitution and national laws, which are in harmony with the relevant international conventions on human rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the seventieth anniversary of which we are commemorating this year. We believe in the importance of the right to development. That is why we have mainstreamed that right in Qatar National Vision 2030 with regard to many objectives related to human rights issues in human, social, economic and environmental development. That has also been translated into our national development strategies. At the same time, the State of Qatar is keen on promoting national human rights institutions and protecting the independence thereof. That includes the National Human Rights Committee, which seeks to raise community awareness of human rights and the obligations of individuals, social justice and tolerance, strengthening equality and non-discrimination, and ending human rights violations.

In that context, I would like to mention that the National Human Rights Committee has listed in various detailed reports, which have been corroborated statistically, numerous human rights violations that were the result of illegal and arbitrary unilateral coercive measures that have been carried out against the State of Qatar since June 2017. The reports also reveal the impacts of those violations in many vital areas on families, individuals and groups of people in the State of Qatar and in the countries imposing that unjust embargo. Such measures contradict international commitments to promoting and protecting human rights, and the international community must therefore condemn and reject them.

The report of the Human Rights Council contains resolutions regarding the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, which reflect the continued egregious violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people. That people should be able to enjoy its inalienable rights, which are guaranteed under international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Given the devastating impacts of the continuing Syrian crisis on the human rights of the brotherly Syrian people, the Human Rights Council has responded with a resolution addressing the dangerous conditions facing civilians and the violation of their fundamental freedoms. The international community should therefore take urgent and effective steps commensurate with such violations. The best way to put an end to those violations is to reach a political solution to the crisis through Syrian negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the State of Qatar to the promotion and protection of human rights at the national, regional and international levels. We will spare no effort to uphold our human rights commitments, and we will continue to support United Nations human rights mechanisms, with the ultimate goal of promoting human rights for all humankind.

**Ms. Shaheen** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate the newly elected members of the Human Rights Council. I also congratulate those members who were re-elected to the Council. We stress the importance of our country's commitment as a member of the Council to participate effectively and cooperate constructively in the area of protecting and promoting human rights.

We listened to the statement made in the General Assembly today by the President of the Human Rights Council. We wish to assure the Assembly of our commitment to uphold international humanitarian law and other commitments in that regard. The United Arab Emirates regrets the lack of consensus within the Human Rights Council regarding the crisis in Yemen.

This year, we commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is an opportunity to reflect on the importance of that historic document, an importance that continues to grow over time, especially in the light of the challenges that we currently face in terms of the human rights situations in various parts of the world. In that regard, I want to assure the Assembly of the steadfast commitment of my country to human rights nationally, regionally and internationally, in keeping with our national priorities and international commitments.

The United Arab Emirates stresses its commitment to continue working as a model for change in the region and as an active member of the international

community. We shall continue to develop and advance our national standards with regard to human rights and to bring them into line with international standards, in addition to strengthening and developing our various human rights mechanisms and institutions. We are also determined to step up cooperation with United Nations human rights bodies and mechanisms and to provide them with the necessary support so that they can carry out their tasks and activities, including the Universal Periodic Review mechanism of the Human Rights Council. We consider it an important and constructive mechanism for exchanging experience and best practices among Member States so as to ensure the realization of human rights.

The United Arab Emirates submitted its third periodic review to the Human Rights Council in January. We underscored the efforts we have undertaken over the past four and a half years, including the developments within our legislative and legal framework, as well as the strengthening of national human rights mechanisms and best practices to protect and promote human rights. My delegation also reported to the Council on the second periodic review recommendations that we have accepted and implemented. That review was broadly welcomed by member States and by a number of non-governmental organizations, reflecting the spirit of constructive partnership with all relevant bodies and institutions. Furthermore, my country is preparing to develop a national plan to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations that we accepted under the third periodic review of human rights.

The United Arab Emirates is working constantly to improve its human rights record. We strive to interact positively with international practices in that regard. As for strengthening our national human rights mechanisms, we have taken the necessary steps to establish a national human rights institution, in line with the Paris Principles on such bodies. We have already carried out a review of the draft law creating that institution, which will be adopted in the near future.

We have also made important achievements in terms of promoting and developing our national legislation, policies and strategies concerning the empowerment of women, gender equality, the empowerment of young and disabled people, the protection of children, combating crimes related to human trafficking, strengthening laws regarding the rights of employees working for the Government, as well as promoting tolerance and eliminating all forms of racial discrimination through

the national tolerance programme. My country recently launched its national policy for the elderly aimed at improving their quality of life and at ensuring their effective and continuous participation in our national social fabric. Those efforts have put our country in an advanced position on the human development and universal happiness indices, in addition to the rule of law and competitiveness.

The United Arab Emirates is committed to upholding our international human rights commitments and cooperating with the relevant international mechanisms for the protection and promotion of human rights. In that regard, we submitted to the relevant committee our first report in June under the United Nations Convention against Torture. We are awaiting the setting of a date to review that report.

As part of strengthening cooperation and dialogue with other United Nations mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, the United Arab Emirates has extended invitations to the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities and the Special Rapporteur on the right to education to visit our country for an exchange of experience and best practices in the area of empowering individuals with disabilities and strengthening the right to education.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore that the United Arab Emirates has made tremendous headway in terms of human rights in a short period of time. We shall continue to undertake assiduous efforts to constructively and systematically enhance the protection and promotion of human rights.

**Ms. Kipiani** (Georgia): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the Human Rights Council for his comprehensive report (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1) and for his efforts and dedication to fulfilling the mandate of the Council.

The current human rights situation is deeply worrying, with violence, discrimination and inequality affecting the lives of people in all corners of the globe. Since its establishment, the Human Rights Council has served as the backbone of our human rights commitments. The recommendations of the Council, special-procedure mandate holders, the Universal Periodic Review process and the technical assistance provided by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), together with other human rights mechanisms of the United Nations machinery, represent important tools for addressing human rights issues. Nevertheless, much

more needs to be done to realize the full potential of this institution. In that respect, I should like to take this opportunity once again to express gratitude to President Vojislav Šuc for his tireless efforts to increase the efficiency of the work of the Council on both the substantive and the technical levels.

When discussing the human rights machinery, one must not underestimate the importance of the Universal Periodic Review process. Georgia deems the Universal Periodic Review a unique human rights mechanism that enables States to better assess developments and implement the policies necessary to improve and advance human rights. We believe that the legislative branch of Governments must necessarily play an important role in implementing United Nations human rights recommendations, since they may require new or amended legislation and, in some cases, national budget appropriations. Parliaments can also play an important role in overseeing Government implementation and compliance with international human rights recommendations. We also welcome the wider engagement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and national human rights institutions. As for the recommendations received by Georgia during the second review cycle, they are being translated into the Government's Action Plan for Human Rights 2018-2020, which is based on our comprehensive long-term human rights strategy.

Georgia supports the strengthening of the Council's delivery of technical assistance and capacity-building support under its agenda item 10, in consultation with and with the consent of the Member States concerned. Once again, the active participation of civil-society actors in the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms is instrumental. We underline the importance of strengthening the role of NGOs and of safeguarding the space for civil society so as to ensure that their voices are heard. Without close cooperation with all stakeholders, it is impossible to secure sustainable development based on democratic values, the rule of law and human rights.

Georgia joins the calls of the international community for an immediate end to reprisals against human rights defenders. There is an urgent need for all States to take necessary measures to prevent such intimidation and reprisals and to take appropriate action to provide remedies for all acts of intimidation and reprisals.



Georgia attaches particular importance to the issue of the implementation of the treaty obligations and human rights recommendations emanating from the United Nations human rights system. At the national level, Georgia has established an institution mandated to track and coordinate the national follow-up to and implementation of such obligations and recommendations. We recommend that Member States continue efforts aimed at the establishment and/or strengthening of national mechanisms, with civil-society participation, that are responsible for the coordination of the implementation of, reporting on and follow-up to the human rights recommendations generated by the main United Nations human rights mechanisms and the relevant regional mechanisms.

I would like to stress Georgia's full support for the special procedures, which represent another effective tool for addressing country-specific and thematic situations. Georgia has extended a standing invitation to all special-procedure mandate holders and has already hosted several visits by them, including the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, who visited Georgia few weeks ago.

During the reporting year, the Human Rights Council has adopted various significant thematic and country-specific resolutions. In that regard, let me underline Human Rights Council resolution 37/40, entitled "Cooperation with Georgia", which calls for immediate access for OHCHR and other international and regional human rights mechanisms to the occupied regions of Georgia. We believe that OHCHR's strong leadership and engagement on the matter will prevent any further deterioration of the situation on the ground.

In conclusion, let me underline Georgia's readiness to join the international community in strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights across the world.

**Mr. Lal** (India): We welcome the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Vojislav Šuc, to this meeting and thank him for his informative briefing.

One month from now, we will celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the guiding text underlying our collective efforts to promote and protect the human rights of all.

Since its establishment 12 years ago, the Human Rights Council, as an intergovernmental subsidiary body of the General Assembly, has sought to overcome the problems that its predecessor faced. The work of the Human Rights Council and its associated procedures and mandates is, regrettably, getting more contentious and difficult. More broadly, the global situation today is troubling, with concern growing over the multiple challenges posed to the spirit of multilateralism owing to the ineffectiveness of global governance mechanisms in finding commonly acceptable solutions. The reasons for many of the difficulties relating to the human rights agenda flow from the often very divergent priorities and concerns of Member States as a result of their differing levels of development, social and cultural contexts, and governance systems.

While the global discourse on human rights continues to evolve, fundamental contradictions remain. The relative prioritization of the individual versus the State, national sovereignty versus international norms, and a universal versus a culture-specific approach all evoke differing opinions. Instances of the politicization of human rights as a foreign policy tool and perceived intrusiveness beyond mandated activities remain areas of concern.

Terrorism has emerged as one of the worst forms of the violation of human rights. My country has had to face repeated terrorist attacks on innocent people, which have originated beyond our borders. Despite terrorism being acknowledged as one of the foremost global challenges, any meaningful collective response to address that menace continues to be thwarted by some. We will soon also have to consider the varied and uneven impact of emerging technologies — from cyberengineering to genetic engineering and artificial intelligence — on peoples' lives and rights.

The work of the Human Rights Council continues to expand. The effectiveness of its work is, however, not always clear. There is also a proliferation of special procedures on both thematic and country-specific situations. Instances of such mechanisms and officials operating on their own without any mandate and producing clearly biased documents only further harm the credibility of the United Nations.

In contrast, the Universal Periodic Review mechanism has seen significant success over the 12 years of the work of the Human Rights Council. All Member States have presented their Universal Periodic Review

at least once. India has presented its Universal Periodic Review in each of the three cycles. A large number of specific recommendations have been implemented by a number of Member States, including India. The concrete success of the Universal Periodic Review and the voluntary national review mechanisms in New York is due to their constructive and participatory nature, as opposed to the selective “naming-and-shaming” approach that has often been resorted to.

As an ancient civilization of immense diversity and the world’s largest democracy today, India has abiding faith in the spirit of multilateralism. India’s approach to human rights continues to evolve as more rights become justiciable and the process of the progressive interpretation of laws by our judiciary evolves.

As an elected member of the Human Rights Council for the term beginning next year, we remain committed to bringing a pluralistic, moderate and balanced perspective aimed at trying to bridge multiple divides. The human rights agenda must be pursued in a fair and equal manner with objectivity, non-selectivity and transparency. For the success of our collective and common cause of promoting and protecting human rights our approach should not be confrontational but should instead focus on a more inclusive, participatory and positive approach through dialogue and capacity-building.

**Mr. Jaime Calderón** (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to recognize the work of the President of the Human Rights Council, Mr. Vojislav Šuc of Slovenia, throughout the year 2018. Having presided over the Council in 2017, El Salvador recognizes the importance of the contributions and perspectives of small countries when it comes to the universal promotion and protection of human rights and the need to uphold the essential role of the Human Rights Council as a central part of the human rights pillar of United Nations activity.

We would like to make some comments on the report contained in documents A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1.

First, El Salvador welcomes the diverse range of themes addressed in the Council’s three sessions this past year, as well as the many successfully concluded Universal Periodic Reviews. However, while we note that the Council adopted many specific resolutions, we also recognize a high level of duplication between the Council’s agenda and resolutions and those of the Third

Committee of the General Assembly. We therefore reiterate our call on their respective future presiding officers to plan their work jointly so as to ensure that the Council, a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, and the Third Committee of the Assembly carry out complementary activities without duplication.

The adoption by the Human Rights Council of more than 10 resolutions on country-specific situations provides a clear example of such duplication. El Salvador is of the opinion that the Council is, in fact, the most appropriate body to discuss such matters, which, together with the Universal Periodic Review, represent useful monitoring mechanisms for all Member States, and we therefore believe that the introduction of specific draft resolutions in the Third Committee is redundant.

My delegation wishes to highlight Council resolutions 37/7, 37/24 and 37/25, on the links between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the universal promotion and protection of civil, political, social, economic and human rights. El Salvador takes a holistic view of development and considers fundamentally artificial any perspective that disconnects efforts on the ground to achieve sustainable development from the promotion of human rights. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals goes hand in hand with the application of the various conventions and covenants on human rights. El Salvador therefore welcomes the decisions taken in paragraphs 1, 2 and 7 of Council resolution 37/24, whereby the Human Rights Council will hold discussions on communicating its perspective to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

El Salvador is a member of the Economic and Social Council and will present the second edition of its Voluntary National Review to the High-level Political Forum in July 2019. We will work together with all Member States to ensure that those inputs are used and taken into account. It is necessary to point out, however, that that approach should be part of a wider conversation under the leadership of the President of the Economic and Social Council, in which we can learn from that exercise, as well as those of previous years, and seek to take better advantage of the Forum, not by simply taking note but rather by truly making use of the diverse inputs provided by the various specialized bodies of the United Nations system.

With regard to the specific question of implementation modalities and in relation to the content of Human Rights Council resolution 37/25, we wish to make it clear that El Salvador's position remains that we should use the channels established by the follow-up processes of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Second Committee and the High-level Political Forum as channels for discussing Sustainable Development Goal 17 and other topics relating to implementation mechanisms in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

El Salvador welcomes Council resolutions 38/4, entitled "Human rights and climate change", and 38/10, entitled "Human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms". Both resolutions are clear examples of the linkages between the human rights, sustainable development and peace and security agendas, which should be viewed holistically from the perspective of prevention in accordance with the recent reform efforts of the Secretary-General and the vision of sustainable peace, which my Government supports.

We would also like to highlight, although it is not a resolution, the joint declaration on unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents, presented by El Salvador at the thirty-ninth session of the Council in September 2018, which was supported by a large number of countries. Upholding human rights throughout the migratory cycle, especially in the case of boys, girls and adolescents, is of the greatest importance to my country, and we highlight the inclusion of that perspective in Council resolutions 37/13, 37/18, 37/20, 38/4, 38/6, 38/8, 38/9, 38/12, 38/19, 39/12 and 39/17.

In conclusion, El Salvador wishes once again to express its full support for the work of the Human Rights Council and the adoption of its report, in its entirety, by the General Assembly. We are aware of the need to continually improve the work of the Council and of the need for States, civil society, the media and our citizens to remain vigilant so as to ensure that the Human Rights Council not make the same mistakes as its predecessor. We congratulate all those States elected as new members of the Human Rights Council for the term 2019-2022, and we are certain that they will, in fulfilling their duties, rise to meet current global expectations for greater consensus and progress, with no room for backsliding, in promoting and protecting human rights for all.

**Mr. Favre** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland thanks the President of the Human Rights Council for his statement and commends his commitment. We are proud of the work achieved by the Human Rights Council under his presidency.

Over the past year, the Council has responded to emerging situations and renewed important mandates. Our country welcomes the Council's efforts to improve the impact of its work on the ground. We encourage it strongly to continue developing monitoring and follow-up instruments aimed at ensuring the effective implementation by States of the recommendations issued by treaty bodies, special procedures and the Universal Periodic Review. We call on all countries to support that crucial approach.

At the same time, we fully support the efforts of the Council's President to strengthen that body, in particular by improving the efficiency of its functioning and increasing its visibility within the United Nations system. Switzerland welcomes the President's determination to address the challenges relating to resource shortfalls. In that respect, it is crucial that consideration be given to how to optimize its working methods. Pursuing certain initiatives on a two-year timeline seems to be a potentially fruitful approach in that context.

Switzerland continues to believe that human rights will be respected, protected and promoted only if they are fully integrated into the United Nations global agenda. Switzerland supports the reforms being carried out by the Secretary-General. The question of the place of human rights in a reformed United Nations was the subject of the fifth Glion Human Rights Dialogue. The Dialogue highlighted, in particular, the need for coordinated action across the three pillars of the United Nations in order to fully achieve the Secretary-General's objectives, given the close interrelationship that exists between them. The discussions also highlighted the importance of efforts to reduce the gap between Geneva and New York. In that regard, Switzerland notes that the discussions and deliberations held in Geneva seem to have little resonance with the New York bodies.

In the light of that situation, Switzerland launched the 13 June appeal on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Human Rights Council, in 2016. That initiative seeks to place human rights at the heart of conflict prevention. Switzerland calls on all Member States to join the 71 countries that have already supported

that appeal and to commit to implementing it. The appeal calls, *inter alia*, for stepping up the exchange of information between the Human Rights Council and the Security Council. The President of the Human Rights Council also has a central role to play in ensuring that information is exchanged more systematically.

In conclusion, Switzerland underscores once again the importance of civil society when it comes to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. We recall that civil-society activities form an indispensable complement to the work of the Human Rights Council. In that context, Switzerland is alarmed by the intimidation and reprisals faced by civil-society actors working to uphold human rights. Switzerland urges States to take all necessary measures to eliminate such unacceptable practices.

**Mr. Carazo Zeledón** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the report on the work of the Human Rights Council during its thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth sessions and its twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth special sessions (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1), and we thank the Council's President, Ambassador Vojislav Šuc, for his presentation.

Costa Rica reaffirms its commitment to human rights as being universal, indivisible and interdependent. All of us enjoy fundamental rights, which are common to all societies and cultural traditions and are based on the intrinsic dignity of each person at all times everywhere. That concept lies at the heart of the United Nations human rights system. That is why we reiterate with conviction our support for the work of the Council and its role as the leading intergovernmental body charged with promoting universal respect for the protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people, without distinction of any kind and in a fair and equitable manner, guided by impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, dialogue and cooperation.

We must ensure that the work of the Human Rights Council is inspired by and focused on giving voice to all people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, which includes denouncing barbarities, fighting all forms of discrimination and violence, and making progress towards reducing inequality. We welcome the institutional strengthening of the Council and especially the Universal Periodic Review, a unique process that places all States on an equal footing in analysing their human rights situations based on the principles of cooperation and constructive international

dialogue, and allows not only for the review of countries' compliance with their obligations but also for the improvement of the practices and approaches in all countries.

We firmly believe that there should be a relationship of equality, and not of asymmetry, between the Council and the main bodies of the United Nations. Efforts to strengthen the Council and improve its functioning, in clear and close coordination with other mechanisms of the human rights system, such as treaty bodies, and with other components of the United Nations system, in particular the Third Committee of the General Assembly and the Security Council, are essential. Better articulation among all the bodies would have a direct impact on the promotion and protection of all human rights and thereby ensure a better quality of life for everyone.

Given the exponential growth in the Council's workload to an unsustainable level and the fragmentation of topics, we welcome the efforts to rationalize the working methods of the Council, including seeking long-term solutions so as to improve its effectiveness and efficiency, which include measures to improve the annual work programme, streamline the number of resolutions and initiatives, consider certain resolutions every two years instead of annually, avoid duplication of effort, consolidate resolutions on related topics, and make maximum use of modern technology. We are grateful for the briefings held on those efforts by the President of the Council throughout the year with a view to maintaining constant coordination between New York and Geneva, and we hope that the upcoming month of December will see the adoption of a package of measures aimed at helping to strengthen the Council's work.

Although not currently a member of the Council, Costa Rica has striven to cooperate with the Council in its work. In that regard, we have supported various initiatives, including one seeking to protect human rights in the context of peaceful protest, which was adopted by consensus. We also worked on the resolution on human rights education, which establishes a new human rights training programme at the global level under the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We ascribe particular importance to the emphasis on human rights training in the light of the worldwide tendency to dehumanize and discriminate against certain groups, such as migrants, refugees and minorities among others. We must return to the very foundations of the



international community, starting with article 1 of the Universal Declaration, which recognizes that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

We welcome the adoption of Council resolution 37/8, entitled “Human rights and the environment”, renewing the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on that topic and giving him the mandate to brief the Third Committee. Costa Rica stands ready to support the Special Rapporteur and, in particular, to contribute to defining a road map leading to the recognition of the right to a healthy and stable environment as a fundamental human right to be enjoyed by all and leaving no one behind.

We also draw attention to the adoption at the most recent session, which ended on 1 October, of resolution 39/1, entitled “Promotion and protection of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela”, which was submitted by 11 countries, including Costa Rica, and sponsored by more than 42 countries. That resolution, adopted for the first time, reiterates the primary responsibility of all States to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of their citizens and to comply with their obligations under international human rights law. The resolution calls on the Venezuelan Government to accept humanitarian assistance aimed at mitigating shortages in foods and medicines, the increase in the number of cases of malnutrition and the outbreak of previously eradicated diseases.

Based on our unwavering commitment to human rights, we will continue to work and collaborate constructively for a Human Rights Council that is effective, transparency, robust and responsive.

**Mr. Moraru** (Republic of Moldova): The Republic of Moldova welcomes the report of the Human Rights Council (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1) presented by the President of the Council, Ambassador Mr. Vojislav Šuc. We appreciate Ambassador Šuc’s dedicated work as the President of the Council and wish to express our full support to him.

Seventy-three years ago, the Charter of the United Nations established human rights as one of the three fundamental pillars of the United Nations system alongside peace and security and development. The Human Rights Council is, therefore, a central body of this Organization, serving as a platform for the promotion of human rights worldwide and keeping

a constant watchful eye on the world’s most pressing human rights challenges.

The variety of issues contained in the Council’s report this year attests to the intensity of the work of the United Nations system in the area of human rights and the ever-expanding list of issues that require the utmost attention of the international community. This year, we mark the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and the States Members of the United Nations should therefore maintain their support for and continue their engagement with the Human Rights Council with the view to promoting the fundamental principles and commitments contained in those Declarations.

While no country in the world can claim to have a perfect human rights record, the Republic of Moldova shares the belief that imperfections and deficiencies should not be concealed or swept aside. We very often hear, and many States agree, that human rights are universal, inalienable, interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. But as repetitive as it may sound, that is not a hollow affirmation. They are the principles that encompass the essence of human rights and the way in which the United Nations should approach them.

There can be divergences of opinion that are based on various political or cultural peculiarities. However, engaging in dialogue and embracing the human rights system that Member States themselves have created is far more productive and beneficial, both for multilateralism and for human rights protection, than simply rebuffing it. In that respect, we reaffirm the importance of granting the unimpeded access of mandate holders to countries, institutions, individuals and civil society with a view to ensuring the fulfilment of the Human Rights Council’s primary role in efforts to ensure accountability and improve the human rights situation worldwide.

We are concerned that, despite the intricate United Nations system in place, human rights violations and abuses continue, in many cases with impunity, the most disconcerting being the continuing reprisals against human rights defenders, the countless innocent victims, including children, fallen in wars or subjected to tremendous suffering, and the continuing subjugation of entire populations to misinformation or manipulation through the control of the media or other means for strategic purposes that are incompatible with

international law. The list certainly does not end there. Those are unacceptable acts, and Member States have the moral and legal responsibility to protect everyone from harm and persecution. The Human Rights Council has the responsibility to remain alert and respond swiftly to such undesirable situations.

Moreover, it has been stated many times that human rights violations are often the precursors of conflicts. Therefore, while the persistent pointing out of such human rights violations may often appear to be a cause of irritation to Member States, in fact addressing those violations in good faith and building institutions for human rights protection could be the very solution needed to ensure prosperous and stable societies and to prevent conflicts. In that regard, the Human Rights Council is the necessary platform for dialogue among Governments and with civil society in order to ensure that violations and grievances are talked through and solutions found in a constructive and non-politicized manner.

Since the establishment of the Council in 2006, the Republic of Moldova has adopted a cooperative approach towards its mechanisms and has issued a standing invitation to all thematic special procedures. The Moldovan Government remains ready to honour that standing invitation; many rapporteurs have visited our country in the past, and we remain open to cooperating with full transparency and diligence in the future.

Our third National Action Plan on Human Rights, for 2018-2022, adopted this year, incorporates the recommendations of United Nations monitoring bodies and other relevant regional organizations, resulting in a comprehensive road map that the Government is fully committed to pursuing. Moreover, that National Action Plan reflects most of the recommendations from Moldova's second Universal Periodic Review, which took place in November 2016.

The Republic of Moldova reaffirms its support for the effective and efficient functioning of the Human Rights Council and will continue to support initiatives aimed at strengthening it further, including efforts seeking to improve the Council's working methods. Only by remaining fit for purpose will the Council retain its relevance.

The Republic of Moldova has put forward its candidature for the Human Rights Council term 2020-2022 at the elections to be held in 2019. As a country that has already served on the Council and gone through

profound societal transformations, the Republic of Moldova wishes to bring to the work of the Council our unique perspective on efforts to promote human rights, in particular in societies emerging from conflict or in transition.

In closing, I would like to welcome both the appointment by the Secretary-General of Ms. Michelle Bachelet as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and her recent first engagement with the Members of the General Assembly in the Third Committee. The support that her Office provides to the work of the Human Rights Council is instrumental to its effective functioning, and we express our openness to cooperating with the High Commissioner in fulfilling her very important mandate.

**Ms. Wessel** (Norway): Norway thanks the President of the Human Rights Council for his presentation of the report of the Council (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1). The report invites us to reflect on the functioning of that body.

Over the past year, we took important decisions in Geneva. Norway is particularly pleased that the new initiative on the contribution of the Human Rights Council to the prevention of human rights violations was adopted in July with strong cross-regional support. In our view, preventing human rights violations is paramount as we seek to promote peace, stability and development.

The twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders provides us with an important opportunity to celebrate the bravery of all human rights defenders and to take collective action to enhance their protection. The High Commissioner for Human Rights highlighted, during the World Human Rights Defenders Summit in Paris this week, that human rights defenders are a key asset in enhancing the preventive work of the United Nations, as their reports provide early warning of impending crises, help us to understand the root causes of conflict and contribute to work aimed at resolving and preventing outbreaks thereof. Norway is looking forward to celebrating the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders during the high-level plenary meeting dedicated to that topic to be held in New York in December.

Norway thinks that it is important to keep in mind the strengths of the Human Rights Council, especially now when we are discussing efficiency measures. We should focus on what works well, but at the same time

find common ground on how we can strengthen the work of the Council. We firmly believe that we can reach consensus through dialogue and cooperation. We take this opportunity to thank the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Šuc, for his professional and transparent leadership of the discussions in Geneva, and we will continue to support that process.

During 2018, the Human Rights Council demonstrated that it has strong tools in its toolbox and that members of the Council are not shying away from using them. We welcome the fact that some of the reports mandated in Human Rights Council resolutions have also been presented to the Security Council when relevant.

As a consistent partner and friend of an independent Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Norway recently signed a four-year financial support agreement with the High Commissioner's Office. We believe that predictability and strategic planning are essential when working to support the Office's efforts to promote and protect human rights for all.

At a time when human rights are being violated and contested, we must strengthen the human rights pillar of the United Nations and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We are more likely to achieve sustainable development and security when human rights are respected.

**Mr. Suan** (Myanmar): I would like to congratulate the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Vojislav Šuc, for his hard work and able leadership.

The report of the Human Rights Council and its addendum (A/73/53 and A/73/53/Add.1), submitted under agenda item 69, contains three resolutions relating to Myanmar. None of those resolutions enjoyed consensus during their adoption at the respective session. Myanmar has categorically rejected the three resolutions because they are politically motivated, intrusive and sovereignty-infringing. They also lack impartiality and objectivity. One sponsor of one of those resolutions even stated in its explanation of vote before the voting in the Council that the establishment of the independent mechanism did not fall within the mandate of the Council as stipulated in the institution-building package and that, in deciding to establish that mechanism, the Council was acting *ultra vires*.

Myanmar, together with the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement, upholds the principled

position of opposing any country-specific resolution. Such resolutions are not conducive to meaningful dialogue and give rise to polarization, division and even confrontation.

Many of us in this Hall have frequently stressed that a constructive approach and genuine cooperation are very important for the promotion and protection of human rights. At this important juncture of efforts to improve the efficiency of the Human Rights Council, objectivity and impartiality are essential principles for all of us to adhere to, especially when it comes to an issue that could have a far-reaching impact on a Member State's sovereignty and dignity.

The Government of Myanmar has rejected the Human Rights Council's establishment of a fact-finding mission on Myanmar since the beginning, because its composition and mandate raise serious concerns. It would lack impartiality and hinder the Government's own efforts to find long-term solutions to the situation in Rakhine state. The sincerity and ethics of the fact-finding mission are questionable, as can be seen by its hasty issuance of a report in time for a Security Council meeting on Myanmar and its distribution in a United Nations conference room of pamphlets containing elements of hatred against a sovereign Member State.

On our position regarding the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, we have all along extended cooperation to the successive Special Rapporteurs on Myanmar, in keeping with our policy to cooperate with the United Nations. Despite such continuous cooperation and accommodation, Myanmar is still being treated unfairly and discriminated against under the pretext of human rights.

Myanmar is committed to continuing to work together with the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. However, the people of Myanmar consider that it would no longer be productive to continue cooperation with the current Special Rapporteur because of her lack of objectivity and non-compliance with the code of conduct. As such, we have requested that the Human Rights Council replace her. We regret that our request has, to date, fallen on deaf ears.

Since cooperation with the United Nations is a cornerstone of Myanmar's foreign policy, Myanmar will continue to extend cooperation to the relevant United Nations mechanisms for the benefit of people of Myanmar. With that in mind, Myanmar has facilitated,

to date, three visits of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General since she assumed her duties in June 2018.

The Government of Myanmar has resolutely rejected the International Criminal Court's ruling of 6 September 2018 in connection with Rakhine state. Our position there is clear: Myanmar is not a party to the Rome Statute, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) has no jurisdiction over Myanmar whatsoever. The ICC's decision was made on dubious legal grounds and concerned a situation where domestic remedies have not yet been exhausted.

The Government of Myanmar takes every allegation of human rights violations seriously. The Government of Myanmar has established an Independent Commission of Enquiry comprising two international diplomats and two national eminent persons. The Commission will investigate all allegations of human rights violations and related issues following the terrorist attacks of 9 October 2016 and 25 August 2017 by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army in Rakhine state with a view to seeking accountability and reconciliation. The Commission will discharge its mandate in accordance with the principles of independence, impartiality and objectivity, and will submit its report within one year. We are willing and able to deal with the accountability issues regarding any alleged human rights violations where there is sufficient evidence. We need, however, to give time and space to the Commission of Enquiry.

Addressing the issues in Rakhine state is a fundamental part of building peace, national reconciliation, security and good governance in Myanmar. The Government of Myanmar is, as a matter of high priority, preparing the necessary conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary and dignified return of the people who have fled to Bangladesh. In accordance with the bilateral agreements and arrangements with Bangladesh, Myanmar is ready to receive the first batch of verified returnees. In accordance with the decision of the meeting of the joint working group established by Myanmar and Bangladesh, held in Dhaka this week, the repatriation will begin next month. We welcome the agreement. We are also working with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and United Nations Development Programme to assist the speedy and efficient resettlement and rehabilitation of returnees.

The challenges facing Myanmar are complex and multifaceted. While striving tirelessly to solve the

issue in Rakhine, the Government is trying to end the armed conflicts that have ravaged the country since its independence in 1948 and bring about peace with a large number of ethnic armed groups. The Government is persisting in its efforts with respect to the peace process and national reconciliation.

The greatest strength of a democratic transition is the unity, determination and active participation of the people under the leadership of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi. We have strong faith in the strength of our national resilience as we face the formidable challenges that we are encountering today. We are resolute in our determination to fulfil the ultimate aspirations of the people to build a democratic federal union, in which justice, freedom and equal opportunity for all its citizens are guaranteed. The international community can best assist Myanmar in realizing its democratic nation-building by making constructive contributions towards Myanmar's endeavours based on understanding and mutual respect.

The resolutions and decision on Myanmar contained in the report of the Human Rights Council (Council resolutions S-27/1, 37/32 and 29/21 and decision 36/115) are not conducive to meaningful dialogue, but give rise only to polarization, and even confrontation. Their focus on confrontation and retribution will only be counterproductive. Against that backdrop, we will continue to categorically reject those resolutions and that decision.

**Mr. Kuzmenkov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Recent years have witnessed a steady uptick in confrontation and politicization in the work of the Human Rights Council, which impedes the thorough and constructive discussion of human rights issues. We are alarmed at the ongoing practice on the part of a number of States, or groups of the States, to attempt to exploit human rights as a weapon for applying political pressure and imposing their values systems, without taking into account the national, historic, economic and cultural specificities of States.

We note the contrived saturation of the Council's agenda with country-specific issues. At the same time, the designation of so-called delinquent countries is arbitrary and politically motivated. The human rights situation in a given country may indeed be a legitimate cause for concern on the part of the international community. However, we cannot countenance interference in the domestic affairs of States and



pressure being brought to bear under a human rights-related pretext. That is an egregious violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Selective criticism and labelling discredit the United Nations Human Rights Council. That kind of practice makes it appear that the United human rights system lacks credibility and that cooperation with that system is pointless. As a consequence, United Nations human rights initiatives become ineffective and less relevant.

At present, we do not see genuine dialogue and cooperation within the Council, and yet those very principles should guide it. In order for the Council to be more effective, it should focus on the delivery of technical assistance to States, and that only with their explicit consent. We regret the persistent attempts to impose myriad oversight procedures on States — procedures that sometimes duplicate others. Those multiplying structures weigh heavily on the United Nations budget, and the results from that approach seldom justify the burden it imposes.

We are alarmed at the entrenched practice of populating the Human Rights Council's agenda with items with a clear political subtext and that have nothing to do with human rights or are at odds with the Council's mandate. That is attested to by the repeated attempts to include wording in documents of the Human Rights Council that can be exploited as a pretext for the referral of certain country-specific issues to the Security Council or the International Criminal Court, or for evoking the so-called responsibility to protect. That is a counterproductive approach and does not help establish effective dialogue on the protection and promotion of human rights.

The Human Rights Council, with its present structure and rules of procedure, was created by all States Members of the United Nations. The introduction of any changes to its work, be they substantive or procedural, can be done only in a collegial manner and following relevant, comprehensive international discussions. By that we mean taking into account the

views of all States Members of the United Nations, not merely those of current members of the Council.

We reject attempts to subjectively adjust the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms. That is at odds with the founding documents of the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. We are alarmed at the mounting proposals in Geneva regarding the need to introduce a number of so-called technical changes in the work of the Universal Periodic Review. At this point, when the third cycle of the review is at its height, that approach undermines the core principles of non-discrimination, constructive dialogue and cooperation within the Council. We are perturbed by the proposals to leverage the forthcoming review of the status of the Council to be held in 2021, as set out in resolution 65/281, with a view to discussing the whole range of issues pertaining to its operations and its overall role within the United Nations system.

In that connection, we cannot support the plans of a number of regional groups to fine-tune and simultaneously reinforce in years to come the link between the Council and all of the bodies at United Nations Headquarters in New York, not just the General Assembly. Let us recall that the Council's terms of reference are clearly set out in its founding resolution 60/251 and were reaffirmed in resolution 65/281. It is important to bear in mind that the Human Rights Council reports to the General Assembly.

The Russian Federation is convinced that the effectiveness of the work of the Council hinges directly on how stringently its member States and observers comply with the established rules and procedures, mandates and tasks conferred upon the Council by the General Assembly. We urge States to adopt a more conscientious approach in their work and to clearly and fully uphold the principle of the rule of law, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the Council and of course, its founding documents.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*