



General Assembly

Seventy-third session

40th plenary meeting
Monday, 26 November 2018, 3 p.m.
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Official Records

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. (Ecuador)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Hoshino (Japan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 128 (continued)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/73/328)

- (a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union
- (b) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation
- (c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization
- (d) Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States
- (e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Caribbean Economic System
- (f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States
- (g) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- (h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community

(i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

(j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie

(k) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

Note by the Secretary-General (A/73/111)

(l) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe;

(m) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

(n) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Note by the Secretary-General (A/73/97)

(o) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization

(p) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

(q) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

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- (r) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries**
- (s) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization**
- (t) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the Collective Security Treaty Organization**
Draft resolution (A/73/L.24)
- (u) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the Central European Initiative**
- (v) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development — GUAM**
- (w) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States**
- (x) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration**
- (y) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)**
- (z) **Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea**

The Acting President: Before giving the floor for explanations of vote or position after adoption, may I remind delegations that such explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Simcock (United States of America): The United States believes that INTERPOL serves an important role in combating crime and encouraging international cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice matters.

The United States supports the intent of resolution 73/11, which is to ensure the continued coordination between the United Nations and INTERPOL. However, we believe that some of the language in the resolution might be misconstrued. In order to avoid such a misunderstanding, we would like to clarify our understanding of paragraph 2. In particular, we want to clarify that the term “in this context” with respect to information-sharing refers broadly to counter-terrorism efforts. We stress that information-sharing for terrorist-screening purposes, which increases the chances of positive identification of terrorists and their

affiliates, as well as making full use of INTERPOL capabilities in this regard, should not be limited solely to strengthening international efforts aimed at ensuring that refugee status is not abused by terrorists, but rather should be used in all screening of travellers.

We also note our understanding that refugee status is not abused when it is granted in accordance with States obligations under international law. We hope that these clarifications are helpful to other Member States in consideration of resolution 73/11.

Furthermore, we want to clarify our support for the issuance of INTERPOL notices. These notices should adhere to law-enforcement and international human rights standards, and we denounce all efforts by Member States to use these measures to target religious and political dissidents, including China’s misuse of INTERPOL notices to target Uighurs.

Finally, we want to reiterate our recognition of INTERPOL as an apolitical international organization that respects the sovereignty of Member States, but stress the importance of the organization choosing individuals for positions of responsibility from countries that demonstrate a clear commitment to transparency and the rule of law. We remain concerned about the disappearance and detention of Meng Hongwei and its implications for a key international law-enforcement agency. Going forward, we urge Member States to continue to elect and support leaders in key positions within the organization who will promote, not undermine, the values and practices that make INTERPOL such a vital international body.

Mr. Kashaev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We make this statement in explanation of position after the adoption of resolution 73/15, entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe” (see A/73/PV.39).

The Russian Federation supports resolution 73/15 and, in general, is in favour of developing cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. We believe that the resolution will give new impetus to cooperation between the two organizations on a wide range of matters. One aim of this cooperation is preventing violence against women, as declared in the Council of Europe’s Istanbul Convention. Russia stands ready to continue to develop cooperation with the United Nations and the Council of Europe on this important matter. At the same time, the Istanbul Convention itself contains provisions that run counter

to Russian legislation, Russia's family-policy concept document, and principled approaches to the protection and promotion of traditional family values.

Moreover, with respect to the Council of Europe's platform for the protection of journalists, we note that it was created in the absence of consensus and reflects the opinion of a narrow group of non-governmental organizations. The platform itself is not a mechanism for monitoring treaty obligations in the framework of the Council of Europe. Therefore, we believe it premature to refer to the experience of the functioning of the structure as positive.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind him that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Al-Arsan (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation would like to exercise its right of reply to address the misconceptions and unfounded accusations made by the observer of the League of Arab States at this morning's plenary under agenda item 128 (d), entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States" (see A/73/PV.39).

At the outset, my delegation states that it will never stoop to the level of the Arab League observer, who was aggressive and unprofessional when he spoke about Syria, one of the founding members of the League. Syria will always be in favour of Arab cooperation. In that context, we officially underscore that, during today's afternoon break, we contacted a large number of representatives of Arab States, who categorically confirmed to us that the observer's attacks and unfounded accusations against the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic were not part of the original statement, which was supposed to reflect the position of the Arab League on the item under discussion. They assured us that the Arab League observer had gone beyond the bounds of his mandate, thereby confirming our assertion this morning that the Governments of one or two States members of that regional organization have hijacked and monopolized the decisions and positions of the Arab League.

I would like now to address the Charter of the League of Arab States, which is the organization's founding law, and the minutes of its official meetings. The observer of the Arab League, who is a diplomat and a former professional ambassador, claimed before the Assembly this morning that the decision to suspend Syria's membership in the League was legal and unanimous. I call on that professional diplomat to review the minutes of the 12 November 2011 meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the League. According to the record of that meeting, three member States expressed their opposition and reservations with regard to the decision to suspend Syria's membership of the League. Furthermore, that professional diplomat stated that the decision to suspend Syria's membership in the League was legal even though he is fully aware that the League's Charter explicitly states that a member can be suspended only at a summit meeting and by the unanimous decision of all member States. I do not wish to dwell on the details, and we do not have a problem with the League as an organization, but we will never remain silent when someone attempts to misrepresent or distort the truth.

I would ask the observer and the members of the Assembly to take a look at the record of the meeting which I have referred to so that they may verify the truth of what I am saying. On 12 November 2011, the Chair of the Arab League Council, who was then the Prime Minister of Qatar, submitted a draft decision to suspend Syria's membership. The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic asked the Secretary-General of the League to let the Council members read the advisory opinion issued by the organization's Office of Legal Affairs on the question of suspension of membership, which explicitly stated that the decision to suspend a League member is similar to a decision to expel a League member. Such a decision should be taken by member States at a summit meeting and adopted unanimously. As a founding member of the League of Arab States, we respect the stature and history of the organization. For that reason, I will not delve into the pressures to which the Secretary-General of the League was subjected in order to keep that advisory opinion from being made public to the member States.

The Arab League observer told the Assembly today that the League did not impose any unilateral coercive economic measures against the Syrian people. I believe that the untruth of that statement will be ascertained by reference to decision No. 7442, adopted by the Arab

League in November 2011, which imposed a number of unilateral coercive economic measures against Syria, including the suspension of transactions with the Central Bank of Syria; the suspension of governmental trade exchanges with the Syrian Government; the freezing of Syrian Government financial assets; the suspension of financial transactions with the Syrian Government; the suspension of all transactions with the Commercial Bank of Syria; the suspension of all funding by Arab central banks to trade exchanges involving the Commercial Bank of Syria; a request to Arab central banks to monitor financial transactions and commercial credits; the suspension of all funding by Arab States for projects on Syrian territories; a request to all Arab airlines to stop their flights to and from Syria; and — the following is a strange measure — the suspension of all the broadcasting of Syrian Government and private channels through Arab satellites.

I would like to ask the Arab League observer the following question. If the foregoing measures do not amount to an economic embargo against the Syrian people, how does he comprehend the unilateral coercive economic measures that the United Nations rejects, condemns and calls for an end to?

The Acting President: I request the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to kindly wrap up his statement, as 10 minutes have elapsed.

Mr. Al-Arsan (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): In conclusion, we in Syria continue to believe that the League of Arab States can regain its role and credibility. However, what we heard today from the League Observer confirms what we said this morning, namely, that there is a movement afoot within the organization to co-opt its decisions and stances and to oppose and silence the majority of the League membership, which supports in deeds and not only in words, the efforts that the Syrian Government is making to eliminate terrorism and move forward with a Syrian-led political process free of any foreign interference, while ensuring the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, reconstruction and recovery.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (k), (l), (o), (u), (v), (w) and (y) of agenda item 128?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I would like to appeal to those Member States intending to submit draft resolutions on the remaining sub-items to do so as soon as possible.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of the item and the remaining sub-items.

Agenda item 133 (*continued*)

Impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

Draft resolution (A/73/L.20)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.20.

Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.20, on the impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets.

Mexico is convinced that the General Assembly is the ideal space to raise awareness among States and in our societies about the paradigm shift of technological progress. This year we have witnessed the profound multidimensional effects of rapid technological change, which affect all countries in the economic, social and environmental spheres. New technologies can change the destiny of our nations and communities and are potential tools for States and agencies of the system to implement public policies to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The draft resolution before us seeks to strengthen the United Nations architecture with regard to rapid technological change and the SDGs and their 169 targets. It calls for coordination, which currently does not exist, between the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and its three components and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. Artificial intelligence is mentioned as a key element among the technologies that can help meet the 2030 Agenda. We call for the issue of technological change to be included as a topic in the next follow-up cycle of the implementation of the Agenda and in the work of the high-level political forum and for its discussion in the regular agenda of the Assembly to be ensured.

We are working to forge stronger links and coordination within the United Nations system to take advantage of the opportunities presented by rapid technological change. The emergence of these new technologies, in particular that of artificial intelligence, represents an evolutionary and existential challenge for humankind. The debate must be broad and translated into positive elements for our societies.

As the Foreign Minister of Mexico pointed out in the General Assembly (see A/73/PV.22), the future of humankind, in the light of these new technologies, is neither predestined nor unchangeable. It depends on the actions and decisions that we take together.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.20, entitled “Impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets”.

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

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/73/L.20, the following countries have also become sponsors of: Andorra, Colombia, France, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Panama, South Africa, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.20?

Draft resolution A/73/L.20 was adopted (resolution 73/17).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 133?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.