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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 35th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 26 October 2018, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Molina Linares (Vice-Chair) . . . . . (Guatemala)

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*In the absence of Mr. Saikal (Afghanistan), Mr. Molina Linares (Guatemala), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 74: Promotion and protection of human rights** (*continued*)

**(a) Implementation of human rights instruments** (*continued*) (A/73/40, A/73/44, A/73/48, A/73/56, A/73/140, A/73/207, A/73/264, A/73/281, A/73/282 and A/73/309)

**(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms** (*continued*) (A/73/138, A/73/139, A/73/139/Corr.1, A/73/152, A/73/153, A/73/158, A/73/161, A/73/162, A/73/163, A/73/164, A/73/165, A/73/171, A/73/172, A/73/173, A/73/175, A/73/178/Rev.1, A/73/179, A/73/181, A/73/188, A/73/205, A/73/206, A/73/210, A/73/215, A/73/216, A/73/227, A/73/230, A/73/260, A/73/262, A/73/271, A/73/279, A/73/310/Rev.1, A/73/314, A/73/336, A/73/347, A/73/348, A/73/361, A/73/362, A/73/365, A/73/385 and A/73/396)

**(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives** (*continued*) (A/73/299, A/73/308, A/73/330, A/73/332, A/73/363, A/73/380, A/73/386, A/73/397, A/73/398 and A/73/404)

**(d) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action** (*continued*) (A/73/36 and A/73/399)

1. **Ms. Giammarinaro** (Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children), introducing her report (A/73/171), said that the report focused on the gender dimension of trafficking in persons in conflict and post-conflict settings and on the importance of integrating a human rights-based approach to trafficking in the women and peace and security agenda of the Security Council.

2. The Secretary-General, in his 2017 report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2017/249), had stated that the term “conflict-related sexual violence” encompassed trafficking in persons when committed in situations of conflict for the purpose of sexual violence or exploitation. Nevertheless, trafficking was still mainly addressed as a security issue, rather than as a human rights violation, and was often overlooked in conflict and post-conflict responses. Significant links

with the women and peace and security agenda were lacking.

3. In response to that shortcoming, the present report aimed to demonstrate how mainstreaming trafficking in persons into all four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda could ensure more efficient anti-trafficking responses and simultaneously contribute to peace processes. The report presented recommendations regarding each pillar of the agenda: prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery. It also emphasized that women must be seen not only as victims or potential victims of trafficking but also as agents of change, playing a crucial role in the prevention of trafficking and re-trafficking, especially in situations of displacement and in post-conflict settings. Through women’s participation and empowerment, a comprehensive and holistic approach could be established.

4. **Ms. Wagner** (Switzerland) said that her delegation welcomed the emphasis in the report on the need to mainstream the fight against trafficking in persons into the work of the Security Council in a more substantive and inclusive manner and to link the issue with the women and peace and security agenda.

5. She wondered whether the Special Rapporteur saw any possibilities for improved data-sharing between the Human Rights Council and the Security Council to ensure a human rights-based approach. She would be interested to hear specific examples where the fight against trafficking in persons had been fully mainstreamed into peacekeeping operations. She also wondered whether other United Nations offices in the field, such as political missions, should take similar measures to those recommended by the Special Rapporteur for peacekeeping missions.

6. Substantive steps must be taken to implement a zero-tolerance policy with respect to sexual exploitation and violence. The Special Rapporteur’s attention to that important problem was evidence of a more consistent approach at the system level towards combating sexual exploitation and violence. Switzerland also supported her recommendation regarding the need for accelerated deployment of human rights personnel specialized in the protection of women to peacekeeping missions. For that reason, Switzerland had supported the crucial work of the Justice Rapid Response initiative since its creation.

7. **Mr. Grout-Smith** (United Kingdom) said that his Government was a long-standing advocate of the need to tackle modern slavery. A Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, launched by the Prime Minister and other world leaders during the seventy-second session of the General

Assembly, had received over 80 endorsements, a sign of growing international political will. Member States must now work together to translate those commitments into meaningful action.

8. The United Kingdom supported the Special Rapporteur's recommendation that the empowerment of women should be at the core of addressing human trafficking and modern slavery. His Government had put gender equality at the heart of its work and wished to ensure that girls and women were protected from exploitation and could access the skills, education, networks and assets they needed to engage in new economic opportunities.

9. Human trafficking and modern slavery were crimes that cut across the three pillars of security, development and human rights, and as such the response should be a priority for the entire United Nations system. He wondered how best to mobilize all relevant United Nations agencies and enhance inter-agency cooperation on the ground.

10. **Ms. Al Mawlawi** (Qatar) said that her country had supported international efforts to combat trafficking in persons by endorsing related action plans and facilitating negotiations on the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, held in September 2017. It had also supported the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action, adopted on that occasion. Moreover, the Government of Qatar had taken relevant legislative and executive measures and had formed a committee to monitor the implementation of the country's national plan on combating trafficking in persons. A national programme had also been developed to rehabilitate and socially reintegrate trafficking victims. Qatar had been one of the largest donors to the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of human trafficking since its inception.

11. The report of the Special Rapporteur noted an increase in efforts to address the issue of conflict-related sexual violence and cited statistics that showed that women and girls comprised a large percentage of trafficked persons. It was therefore important to include trafficking issues in efforts to implement the women and peace and security agenda. She asked the Special Rapporteur to elaborate on her efforts to integrate the issue of trafficking in persons into the four pillars of the women and peace and security agenda.

12. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union and its member States were committed to combating trafficking in persons and to addressing its nexus with conflict-related sexual

violence. They remained deeply concerned by the high prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence committed against girls and boys in conflict. In 2017 alone, the European Union had allocated almost 22 million euros in humanitarian aid for the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence worldwide.

13. In her report, the Special Rapporteur had recommended that United Nations field operations mainstream trafficking in persons into all areas of work relating to prevention of and protection and recovery from conflict-related sexual violence, including when engaging in humanitarian dialogue on respect for international humanitarian and human rights law with non-State actors. He asked whether she could provide any best practice examples of such mainstreaming, especially in relation to engagement with non-State actors.

14. The report also called for more research into the harmful consequences that conflict-related sexual violence and trafficking had for women and girls, including in terms of long-term stigma and discrimination. Stigma was a significant obstacle to the reintegration and recovery of victims of sexual and gender-based violence. He wondered whether the Special Rapporteur could elaborate further on that issue, in particular as it related to victims of trafficking in conflict and post-conflict settings.

15. **Ms. Ahmed** (Bahrain) said that concerted national efforts had been made to eradicate the crime of human trafficking in Bahrain. In accordance with its anti-trafficking-national strategy, the Government had made strides in enhancing effective coordination, including through the establishment of a national committee that facilitated the referral of complaints. A shelter for trafficking victims, supported by the committee, had already provided services to some 200 individuals in emergency situations. It not only functioned as a shelter but also offered legal services to foreign workers and coordinated with their embassies. The country's success in combating trafficking in persons had been reflected in the Trafficking in Persons Report issued in June 2018 by the Department of State of the United States of America, which had given Bahrain the highest ranking for fully meeting the standards of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

16. **Ms. Sukacheva** (Russian Federation) said that the mandates of all special procedures were determined by the relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council and should be implemented in strict accordance with the existing division of responsibilities among the different

bodies and departments of the United Nations. The attempts of the Special Rapporteur to muscle her way into Security Council affairs were cause for serious concern. Her recommendation to expand the scope of work of the Security Council in the area of trafficking in persons was counterproductive. There was no need to create a separate communication channel between the Special Rapporteur and the Security Council.

17. The Russian Federation could not understand why the Special Rapporteur had paid such close attention to sexual violence, including in the context of conflict, when there was already a sufficient number of bodies and mechanisms in the United Nations directly entrusted with preventing sexual violence. For the same reason, the Russian Federation could not support the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur to mainstream trafficking in persons into the women and peace and security agenda. Her recommendations pertaining to the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) went far beyond her mandate. The Russian Federation cautioned the Special Rapporteur against independent policymaking. It was unacceptable for the Special Rapporteur to casually manipulate serious legal concepts.

18. **Mr. Al Khalil** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation objected to the reference in paragraph 49 of the Special Rapporteur's report to the "constitutional councils of Rojava", as the Syrian Government did not recognize those councils. Syria moreover objected to the Special Rapporteur's divergence from her mandate in promoting secessionist conflicts that threatened regional peace and the territorial integrity of Syria.

19. Furthermore, the Syrian delegation objected to the lack of verified facts in the report as well as the failure to mention initiatives undertaken by the Syrian Government, such as the formation of a department at the Ministry of the Interior to combat trafficking in persons, the adoption of relevant legislation, the provision of services to trafficking victims and the formulation of a national plan to combat trafficking in persons that focused on prevention, protection of victims, judicial prosecution and enhancement of regional and international cooperation.

20. It was unfortunate that the Special Rapporteur, in paragraph 38 of her report, had spread media propaganda from neighbouring countries that was detrimental to the victims of trafficking, particularly women and children. She had also ignored trafficking in persons committed by terrorist organizations.

21. **Mr. McElwain** (United States of America) said that his country had pressed for gender-based violence to be addressed from the outset of an emergency, and

emergency and humanitarian responses in conflict and post-conflict settings should incorporate anti-trafficking strategies. Such initiatives should be informed by the experiences of victims and designed based on their input.

22. The report tended to overemphasize the situation of refugees in camps, given that more than two thirds of refugees resided in urban areas or settlements. It was important to prevent and mitigate the risk of trafficking in refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons, in non-camp settings as well as camps, through registration, access to livelihoods and education, and other services.

23. Since 2001, the United States Agency for International Development had invested over \$290 million in programmes to address trafficking in persons in 71 countries. The Agency had committed more than \$82 million to counter-trafficking programmes for the 2017 fiscal year, including in conflict and crisis-affected countries.

24. His delegation appreciated the report's recognition of the anti-trafficking task team, led by the International Organization for Migration, Heartland Alliance International and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which the United States was supporting. He asked whether the Special Rapporteur had encountered other promising policies and programmes aimed specifically at identifying and helping women and girls who were victims of trafficking in conflict settings. He also wondered whether the Special Rapporteur could recommend similar initiatives for inclusion in humanitarian responses to natural disasters.

25. **Mr. Situmorang** (Indonesia) said that his country, together with Australia, was a founder and Co-Chair of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. In August 2018, the members and observers of the Bali Process had reaffirmed their commitments. One of the greatest achievements of the Bali Process was the organization of the Bali Process Government and Business Forum, which aimed, among other objectives, to eradicate trafficking in persons and forced labour from the supply chain.

26. Following the creation of a national task force in Indonesia on combating trafficking in persons in 2008, almost 200 task forces had been established at the district level. Measures had also been taken to protect the identity of victims and assist in their recovery. With a view to mitigating the impact of trafficking through social rehabilitation and reintegration, the Ministry of Social Affairs had created 27 safe houses in major

provinces of origin or transit in Indonesia. He wondered how a human rights-based approach could best work in parallel with a law enforcement approach in combating trafficking in persons, particularly in transit countries such as Indonesia.

27. **Mr. Meier** (Liechtenstein) said that human trafficking, modern slavery and related crimes were not only grave human rights violations but also constituted a lucrative business model that generated \$150 billion a year. His Government, together with the Government of Australia and the United Nations University, had established the Financial Sector Commission on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, a public-private partnership that brought together financial entities, global regulators, survivors, the United Nations and the anti-slavery movement to examine how the financial sector could tackle modern slavery and human trafficking. He asked how States could better combat those crimes, which disproportionately affected women and girls, and what possibilities there might be for cooperation between the Financial Sector Commission and the Special Rapporteur.

28. **Ms. Velichko** (Belarus) said that her country supported the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. Belarus was constantly expanding its efforts to prevent trafficking in persons. It welcomed the convening of the meeting of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons at the level of principals in May 2018, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/195](#). Efforts should be strengthened to address new challenges and threats, in particular the increase in online trafficking in persons, especially children. At its twenty-seventh session, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had adopted a resolution on preventing and combating trafficking in persons facilitated by the criminal misuse of information and communications technologies, with the aims of boosting international efforts in that regard, facilitating further research into the matter and developing partnerships involving Governments, academic circles, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. She asked how the Special Rapporteur would contribute to the implementation of that resolution and to addressing that problem.

29. **Mr. Hendricks** (South Africa) said that women and girls often fell victim to trafficking because of their vulnerability to poverty, unemployment and inequality and their limited educational opportunities. The conditions perpetuating those challenges needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. In addition, technology was often used to lure women and girls and leave them vulnerable to trafficking.

30. Trafficking in persons was a transnational organized crime that required a strong collective approach. The Government of South Africa had enacted an anti-trafficking law in 2013, which criminalized trafficking and provided for measures to protect and assist victims. During the period 2017–2018, South Africa had achieved a conviction rate of about 77 per cent in trafficking cases and long prison sentences had been imposed. At the subregional level, South Africa was participating in Operation Batho, a joint initiative between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization. A joint operation conducted in August 2018 had resulted in the arrest of over 50 suspects.

31. South Africa encouraged all Member States to apply the uniform norms and standards established in line with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in order to eradicate the scourge of trafficking in persons. He asked the Special Rapporteur how States could strengthen cross-border collaboration on trafficking, especially given the lack of harmonized data-capturing systems.

32. **Mr. Christodoulidis** (Greece) said that his country had consolidated and strengthened a gender- and child-sensitive framework for the early identification, assistance and referral to protection services of victims and potential victims of trafficking. Safe zones for minors and vulnerable women had been created in reception and identification centres, and guardians for unaccompanied children and child protection officers had also been appointed to most of those centres. Vulnerable groups could access health care and unaccompanied minors could access education.

33. Recent developments in domestic legislation included amendments to the Criminal Code and the recognition of forced marriage as a form of human trafficking. The new guardianship law was expected to enhance the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of unaccompanied minors.

34. Greece had established a national identification and referral system for victims and presumed victims of trafficking, supervised by the Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and managed by the National Centre for Social Solidarity. Greece placed great emphasis on the recovery and relief of victims of gender-based violence, including trafficking. Shelters were being operated throughout the country by the authorities and by non-governmental organizations, and information on the services they provided was available in several languages.

35. Greece remained committed to further consolidating a gender-sensitive, victim-centred and rights-based approach to policymaking in order to find sustainable solutions for survivors.

36. **Mr. Thein** (Myanmar) said that many factors contributed to vulnerable situations, especially in developing countries, including poverty, a lack of job opportunities and economic sanctions. Myanmar had been advocating for a gender perspective to be mainstreamed into all conflict prevention initiatives and strategies, as well as post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

37. In Myanmar, domestic legislation and plans were focused on prevention, protection, prosecution, policy and cooperation. The current national plan of action was complementary to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and to the women and peace and security agenda.

38. Successive Governments in Myanmar had attempted to secure ceasefires with armed groups and reach political agreements that were acceptable to the parties involved. Regarding the recommendation that States should involve non-State actors in the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence and trafficking through the signature and implementation of deeds of commitment, he asked what measures could be taken to ensure that non-State armed groups actually signed the deeds and how their compliance with agreements could be monitored at a time when confidence and trust could be fragile.

39. Myanmar was working with Bangladesh, UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme on the voluntary, safe and dignified return of those displaced from Rakhine by the violence that had followed the terrorist attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army in 2017. Given the fragility of the current situation, he asked what the United Nations or the international community could do to help ensure that the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army or human traffickers would not disrupt the process in the immediate term. He also wondered what could be done to prevent women, girls and children in refugee camps around the world from becoming victims of trafficking.

40. **Ms. Shlain** (Israel) said that she wished to highlight the issue of surrogacy, which sometimes led to the exploitation of women. Within Israel, surrogacy was strictly regulated and supervised by law. An international framework must be created as a matter of urgency and all States must cooperate to prevent exploitation and human rights abuses. The Israeli authorities, including the national anti-trafficking unit, had been gathering information and had issued a report

on the matter. They were closely monitoring the situation and discussing possible avenues for action. Various legislative initiatives were under way to regulate international surrogacy for Israeli citizens in a similar way to the existing law on domestic surrogacy.

41. Israel was a major global partner in combating trafficking and human rights abuses, and fully supported international efforts, including the development of international conventions and mechanisms on the subject. She wondered how the Special Rapporteur saw international cooperation in that regard and what improvements she would recommend.

42. **Ms. Giammarinaro** (Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children) said that she took the words of caution expressed by the Russian Federation against independent policymaking by special rapporteurs very seriously and wished to reassure Member States that her mandate was not about policymaking, only reporting, which she would continue to do independently.

43. The idea of mainstreaming anti-trafficking measures into the women and peace and security agenda was not new. Recent Security Council resolutions on the subject of trafficking in persons made reference to the women and peace and security agenda. Although such references were sporadic, they showed that the Council had acknowledged the existence of a link. Her point was how to elaborate on and further the implementation of that link. The Secretary-General had recently acknowledged that trafficking could amount to a form of conflict-related sexual violence. Sexual violence in conflict settings was highly gendered and took many forms, including trafficking for sexual exploitation. The women and peace and security agenda had itself recognized trafficking as one of the areas of concern, and numerous treaty bodies had also highlighted the link. She therefore firmly believed that the suggestion for possible integration should be explored and possibly implemented.

44. Field missions played a pivotal role. An initiative that had already borne fruit was the anti-trafficking task team, led by the International Organization for Migration, Heartland Alliance International and UNHCR, which had been instrumental in fostering greater cooperation between United Nations agencies in the field. In general, staff deployed to perform security duties did not speak the same language as staff deployed to work on development issues. Staff specialized in identifying vulnerabilities to trafficking, sexual slavery and all related situations should cooperate with security and development personnel. Everyone needed to learn to speak the same language in order to be able to identify

early warning signs, vulnerabilities and opportunities to prevent trafficking, and to protect people and ensure redress.

45. Regarding the due diligence obligations of Member States to engage with non-State actors, who were usually armed, she had given the example in her report of an instrument developed by the non-governmental organization Geneva Call. Twenty-four armed non-State actors had signed deeds of commitment for the prohibition of sexual violence and the elimination of gender-based discrimination and there was no evidence of any violations so far. It seemed to be a promising experience and a possible good practice for replication.

46. In terms of broadening the scope of her recommendations to include disasters, she was aware that the issues faced in conflict and post-conflict situations also applied to natural disasters. Vulnerability to trafficking was very high, and anti-trafficking measures should also be regarded as life-saving interventions following a natural disaster. It was not necessary to demonstrate an evidence-based need for anti-trafficking measures because it had been shown that, just as in situations of conflict, trafficking was a systemic consequence of a natural disaster.

47. Improving international cooperation on trafficking between Member States was of paramount importance. The idea of building on Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) was important because anti-trafficking measures, as far as women and girls and gender-based violence were concerned, should be included in national action plans, which could form the basis for better cooperation on the issue.

48. **Ms. Bhoola** (Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and its consequences), introducing her report ([A/73/139](#) and [A/73/139/Corr.1](#)), said that the report identified the gender-related dimensions of contemporary forms of slavery, with a particular focus on gender discrimination and inequality as both a cause and consequence of those practices.

49. To end slavery, the human rights violations that created the conditions for slavery to thrive in the global economy must be halted. That required full compliance by States with their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, as well as progress towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 8 and target 8.7. States needed to ensure the promotion of substantive gender equality and women's rights by redressing the socioeconomic disadvantages experienced by women in all areas of life, addressing harmful gender stereotypes, stigmatization

and discrimination and strengthening the participation of women. As most forms of slavery occurred in the private sector, it was imperative for businesses to comply with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework, and to ensure adequate remedies for human rights violations.

50. In formulating gender-specific and women's human rights-based approaches to ending contemporary forms of slavery, more research should be conducted into the specific and differentiated experiences of men and women in different economic sectors and geographical contexts. That would ensure laws and policies which recognized that women were not a homogeneous group, nor were they all victims, but that women and girls were autonomous rights-holders and active agents of change.

51. A gender and women's human rights analysis could shed light on contemporary forms of slavery across a number of economic sectors: agriculture, garment work, electronics manufacturing, accommodation and food services, and domestic and care work. In her report to the Human Rights Council on contemporary forms of slavery in supply chains ([A/HRC/30/35](#)), she had discussed how the garments and apparel industry, which supported fast turnover to meet fashion requirements, was notorious for the exploitation of women workers at the lowest level of transnational supply chains.

52. Her key conclusions were that women and girls globally were disproportionately affected by slavery, especially in feminized economic sectors, such as domestic work and garment work, and that gender discrimination and inequality increased their vulnerability to such practices. She urged States to formulate policies addressing the specific experiences of women and girls, given that their exploitation in contemporary forms of slavery was shaped not only by their lack of freedom and, therefore, economic opportunity, but also by social, legal and cultural discrimination based on gender.

53. **Mr. Alajmi** (Qatar) said that his delegation welcomed the elucidation of the causes and consequences of modern slavery in the report of the Special Rapporteur. The statistics cited in the report were cause for grave concern, especially as the majority of victims were women and girls. In line with its commitment to promote and protect human rights, Qatar had ratified international instruments on modern slavery. Moreover, the Qatari Constitution contained numerous articles on the need to respect the freedom, rights and dignity of human beings, and the Government

had adopted legislation criminalizing sexual exploitation, prostitution and slavery. Qatar had joined the countries that had signed the Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, which had been adopted in September 2017 on the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly.

54. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union and its member States remained committed to eradicating contemporary forms of slavery and to protecting victims and bringing perpetrators to justice. They shared the view of the Special Rapporteur that a gender-based approach was urgently needed to effectively address contemporary forms of slavery. He asked if the Special Rapporteur could elaborate on her recommendations for regional organizations to eradicate contemporary forms of slavery in a gender-sensitive manner. He would also be grateful for best practices on how to include women and girls in decision-making related to the development and implementation of relevant policies and programmes.

55. **Mr. Meier** (Liechtenstein) said that his country was pleased that the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration was gender sensitive and acknowledged the specific vulnerabilities and needs of migrant women. He asked what concrete measures were needed to diminish the risks of contemporary forms of slavery among migrant women, including female migrant workers.

56. **Mr. Grout-Smith** (United Kingdom) said that the focus in the report on the role of the private sector and supply chains in contemporary forms of slavery was welcome, as that was an area in which the United Kingdom was keen to work further with the Special Rapporteur, Member States and businesses. Contemporary forms of slavery occurred in every country, regardless of economic development, and the United Kingdom was no exception. The Prime Minister, together with other world leaders, had therefore launched a Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Trafficking in Persons. The United Kingdom was dedicated to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets related to forced and child labour, modern slavery and trafficking in persons. Strong United Nations leadership was vital to reach those targets. He asked what role the Special Rapporteur envisaged for the United Nations in advancing that agenda.

57. **Mr. McElwain** (United States of America) said that his delegation welcomed the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur to collect and analyse sex-

disaggregated data on contemporary forms of slavery in specific economic sectors, as solid data served as the basis for the development of effective policy responses. The United States considered contemporary forms of slavery, as described in the Special Rapporteur's mandate, to be a form of trafficking in persons. It supported programmes that built the capacity of Governments to prosecute trafficking cases; efforts to protect and provide services to victims; and measures to educate government officials, professionals and communities on the indicators of trafficking in persons with a view to preventing the crime. The United States would be interested to learn more about the worldwide anti-slavery movements led by women, given its strong support for civil society engagement on that issue.

58. **Ms. Bhoola** (Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and its consequences) said that she looked forward to her country visit to Qatar in 2019 and thanked Qatar for its support for her mandate.

59. Regional organizations like the European Union played a critical role in identifying specific manifestations of contemporary forms of slavery and developing specific gender-sensitive responses, including by involving women, as agents of change and decision makers, in the development of relevant policies and legal instruments. A number of countries in the European Union had established intergovernmental committees to develop a holistic approach focused on the empowerment of women and the creation of increased economic opportunities.

60. How to diminish the risks of contemporary forms of slavery among female migrant workers was an important question in the light of the increase in global migration. In her report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/39/52), she had identified concrete measures to prevent and address contemporary forms of slavery arising in the context of migrant women in domestic work, including the need to address fraudulent recruitment practices. Migration for domestic work was often facilitated by recruitment agencies, which therefore needed to be regulated. Women migrating for domestic work should be provided with more information, in relevant languages, about the jobs offered and the conditions in destination countries, including the right to access to justice in those countries. In some countries, macroeconomic policies specifically facilitated the migration of women but failed to provide the necessary support when the women returned. Women in domestic and care work must be recognized as workers by the laws of destination countries.

61. The United Nations had a critical role to play not only in consolidating cross-cutting initiatives to combat trafficking in persons and modern slavery, but also in ensuring that such initiatives had a gender perspective and addressed violence faced by women in the workplace. Policy gaps must be filled, and States must be held accountable for complying with their international legal obligations. In that regard, the International Labour Organization was promoting an international instrument to end sexual harassment and violence against men and women in the world of work.

62. Much of the research in her report had been based on data provided by grass-roots organizations. A number of civil society organizations led by women, such as the Centre for Women's Global Leadership, were carrying out important research that facilitated change and a gender-specific response to the problems experienced by women in the workplace and in the global economic context. Alliance 8.7 involved a number of women in key positions, and Delta 8.7, the research-driven component of Alliance 8.7, was mandated to examine gender-specific indicators of contemporary forms of slavery.

63. **Ms. Elver** (Special Rapporteur on the right to food), introducing her report (A/73/164), said that, after a prolonged decline in hunger, the number of undernourished people was once again on the rise. According to the Food and Agriculture Agency of the United Nations, 821 million people worldwide were affected by chronic food deprivation; in certain countries, stunted growth among children and adult obesity were at unacceptably high levels. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of zero hunger by 2030, it was increasingly important to ensure adequate and accessible food for the global population. Agricultural workers were among the most affected by the rise in hunger, as they were among the most food insecure. Furthermore, they often worked under dangerous conditions and without labour protections.

64. In August 2018, a California federal court had ordered the corporation Monsanto to compensate a former school groundskeeper, who had developed cancer after regularly using its Roundup product, for its failure to warn him of Roundup's potential carcinogenic effects. The ruling was likely to create a new avenue of redress for agricultural workers whose human rights had been violated by persistent exposure to pesticides.

65. **Ms. Alfeine** (Comoros), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that farming was the primary source of food and income in Africa and provided up to 60 per cent of all jobs. Although agricultural workers were critical to the realization of

food security in general, they faced many challenges in securing their own right to food. The rights of women in particular must be recognized, as they carried out most agricultural tasks in Africa. The African Group welcomed the reference in the Special Rapporteur's report to the International Union of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations, which had undertaken projects in 16 African countries to ensure that women could participate in unions and advocate for maternity rights and protection from workplace violence and sexual harassment. The right to food of migrant workers, undocumented workers, plantation workers and children working in the agriculture sector was also of concern.

66. According to the report, global supply chains had grown dramatically over the previous decade. They were largely funded through foreign direct investment and had been criticized for slavery-like conditions. She asked how Member States could ensure that the multinational enterprises and corporations participating in those supply chains protected the rights of workers in the absence of an international instrument.

67. **Ms. Inanç Örnekol** (Turkey) said that agricultural workers comprised approximately one third of the world's workforce and their human rights situation must be addressed, with a focus on their right to food in a rapidly changing global food system. Noting the report's recommendation that the human rights of agricultural workers be approached from a holistic perspective, her delegation wished to hear more about how the United Nations system could be utilized to further such an approach.

68. **Mr. Gonzalez Behmaras** (Cuba) said that although food was a basic human right linked to the enjoyment of the right to life, successive United States Governments had attempted to ignore that fact. As part of its strategy to increase hunger among the Cuban people, the United States continued to impose a blockade on her country which targeted its agricultural sector; as a result, hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue had been lost in the previous year alone. It was therefore important for the Special Rapporteur to urge States not to apply unilateral coercive measures that prevented the full enjoyment of the right to food. In late October 2018, Cuba would again present to the General Assembly a draft resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba and urged the international community to reject that criminal policy.

69. **Ms. Diedricks** (South Africa) said that her Government supported land restitution and

redistribution, measures that would address the sins of the past in a way that strengthened the economy, increased agricultural production for all and realized workers' right to food security. Redistribution would ensure that the land was returned to those from whom it was taken under colonialism and apartheid.

70. A legally binding international instrument was necessary to hold corporations to account for violations of human rights, particularly those stemming from extraterritorial actions and operations. While her delegation welcomed the recommendation that States should adopt the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, she wondered how the international community could ensure that all relevant stakeholders adhered to it.

71. **Mr. Forax** (Observer for the European Union) said that agricultural work required attention, given the changes in food production caused by technological advances and globalization. Agricultural workers comprised one third of the world's workforce, many of whom were exposed to health hazards, long hours, deprivation of food and water and other inhumane conditions. They were also overlooked in legal frameworks and discouraged from exercising their freedom of association. The growth of global supply chains and multinational enterprises should be accompanied by transparency and responsibility towards employees at all stages of the production process. The report recommended that synergies between the public and private sectors in that area should be improved. He asked the Special Rapporteur how awareness could be increased regarding the responsibilities of the private sector, as well as civil society and academia, in promoting the right to food.

72. Women agricultural workers, particularly pregnant women, were exposed to dangerous working conditions but not adequately protected by legal systems. Given that the adoption of laws did not in itself guarantee positive change, he asked what steps should be taken to improve implementation of the existing legal framework.

73. **Ms. Nguyen Lien Huong** (Viet Nam) said that her Government had hosted the Special Rapporteur during a visit to Viet Nam in November 2017 and appreciated her contributions to discussions with representatives of government agencies and local authorities, as well as other relevant stakeholders. The report of the Special Rapporteur was highly relevant to Viet Nam, a country in which 70 per cent of the population were agricultural workers. In the light of the concerns expressed in the report about the effect of dangerous pesticides on agricultural workers, she wished to hear more about best

practice regulations and the steps that could be taken to reduce pesticide use.

74. **Ms. Widyaninssih** (Indonesia) said that her Government, in line with its commitment to work with special procedures mandate holders, had hosted the Special Rapporteur during a visit to Indonesia in which she had met with representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture and Marine Affairs and Fisheries. She had also met with Indonesian human rights institutions and members of civil society and had witnessed how local communities worked together to overcome specific regional challenges in securing the right to food. She asked the Special Rapporteur to elaborate on how to work effectively with stakeholders to ensure protection for rural workers. Her delegation also wished to hear about initiatives that had resulted from improved synergies and coordination among international organizations, including United Nations agencies.

75. **Ms. Elver** (Special Rapporteur on the right to food) said that Africa occupied a special place when it came to the right to food and the situation of agricultural workers. She did not make a distinction between subsistence farmers and agricultural workers, as the families of subsistence farmers, including women and children, worked on their small plots, albeit as unpaid labour. Thus, taking that into consideration, 60 to 70 per cent of African workers were covered by the report. The African Group had developed good practices with respect to supporting the unionization of women workers. While workers in general faced obstacles, women in particular faced even greater barriers, and encouraging unionization was therefore an important development.

76. She was grateful to the representative of Turkey for highlighting the importance of the holistic approach followed by the United Nations system, despite the specific mandates of its various agencies. The Sustainable Development Goals were an example of how the United Nations promoted holistic cooperation between its agencies and Governments, civil society and the private sector. While there were obstacles to streamlined coordination at the institutional level, special rapporteurs were able to share knowledge on a personal level with their counterparts at other agencies. Without the input of experts at the International Labour Organization, for example, the report would not have been as comprehensive. However, more could still be done to improve cooperation.

77. The embargo against Cuba contravened social and economic human rights principles. Its purpose was to force the Government to change its policies; moreover, it affected the lives of ordinary people, hindering their

access to food, water and health. The United Nations should revisit the issue, and the submission by Cuba of the relevant draft resolution was welcome. Special rapporteurs had made great efforts in explaining to Member States why such unilateral measures violated human rights principles.

78. The prospect of a binding instrument to address global supply chains was important. Consumers had little control over where food was sourced or who produced and transported it. Although the transnational nature of those supply chains had led to blurred lines with respect to responsibility and jurisdiction, the United Kingdom was addressing those problems and the European Union had taken measures to regulate the unwieldy system.

79. She welcomed the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants, which afforded an opportunity for their recognition worldwide. While recognition was important, policies based on the draft declaration's recommendations had yet to be implemented in certain countries. As the rights contained therein were not new rights but were covered by other documents, Governments should be comfortable in supporting them.

80. In response to the question regarding cooperation between the public and private sectors and civil society, she said that those who worked in the area of food policy had been following a holistic approach. After the 2009 World Summit on Food Security, the decision-making mechanisms of the Committee on World Food Security had been reformed to include input from civil society and the private sector, thus making the Committee an important and inclusive forum for addressing such issues as the elimination of hunger and malnutrition.

*The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.*