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Official Records

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. (Ecuador)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 15

Culture of peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/73/391)

Draft resolutions (A/73/L.43, A/73/L.48, A/73/L.52 and A/73/L.55)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.43.

Mr. Islam (Bangladesh): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.43, entitled “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace”.

A culture of peace is an aspiration of all humankind. Promoting and inculcating a mindset of a culture of peace is at the core of the creative management of differences and divisions. A culture of peace can become a credible pathway to sustaining peace.

Over the years, Bangladesh has remained committed to the values and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and worked alongside the international community to promote and protect peace. The Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina remains committed to the issue and underscores the importance of a whole-of-society approach in

our national context to promoting a culture of peace. Beginning in 1999, Bangladesh has facilitated this seminal resolution for 19 years in a row. Once again, we thank delegations for their active participation in the informal consultations on the draft resolution this year.

We take note of the growing interest in addressing a range of pertinent issues through resolutions under this agenda item. The recurrent reference to the original resolution in the subsequent resolutions further consolidates the commitment of Member States to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. This year, the draft resolution has the following salient additions.

First, the draft resolution acknowledges the high-level event of the President of the General Assembly held on 5 September on the theme “The culture of peace: a credible pathway to sustaining peace”. The event provided an opportunity for Member States to deliberate on the interplay and complementarity between those two seminal notions at the United Nations. The President’s summary of the event has been duly noted, and we believe it can be useful reference material for our collective work towards a surge in peace diplomacy.

Secondly, in the spirit of the President’s high-level event, the draft resolution recognizes that efforts towards peacebuilding and sustaining peace should take into account the promotion of a culture of peace, and vice versa. It further acknowledges the potential contribution of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture to promoting a culture of peace, pursuant

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to resolution 72/276, entitled “Follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace”. We believe there is scope for further exploring and streamlining that issue through informed consultations in all relevant forums.

Thirdly, in further recognition of the contribution of a culture of peace towards a comprehensive and balanced approach to combating terrorism, the draft resolution contains a reference to resolution 70/254 of 12 February 2016, on the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. It is worth recalling that resolution 72/284 on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Review reaffirms the enduring relevance of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

Fourthly, the draft resolution encourages Member States, United Nations entities, regional and subregional organizations and relevant actors to consider instituting mechanisms to involve young people in the promotion of a culture of peace, tolerance and intercultural and interreligious dialogue, among other issues. That provides an opportunity to further explore the promotion of a culture of peace in the context of the ongoing discussion on youth, peace and security pursuant to Security Council resolution 2250 (2015).

Fifthly, while recognizing the important contribution of the relevant United Nations entities in promoting a culture of peace, the draft resolution makes particular reference to the recent work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and its Group of Friends. This reflects the continued support of Member States for the Alliance’s contribution to promoting a culture of peace through the entire spectrum of its activities.

On 13 September 2019, we will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. To that end, the draft resolution requests the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session to give special attention to its appropriate and befitting observance by holding the High-level Forum on that date next year, which will be an opportunity to renew our shared commitment to further strengthening the global movement for the culture of peace. We look forward to working with the Office of the President of the General Assembly to make the event a success.

We sincerely thank those delegations that have already sponsored the draft resolution and encourage

others to follow suit prior to its upcoming adoption by consensus.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.48.

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the 120 Member States that make up the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.48, entitled “International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace”.

Many delegations have brought up the need to defend multilateralism at this session of the General Assembly — during the general debate, in the various committees, at the high-level dialogue in October on the theme of “Renewing commitment to multilateralism: high-level dialogue between the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council”, and in the November Security Council debate on strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations (see S/PV.8395).

For its part, NAM has always insisted on the need to promote, defend and strengthen multilateralism, especially given the current international situation. We also heed the Secretary-General’s calls to make the United Nations an instrument for increased diplomacy for peace, which would help our efforts to make our Organization relevant to all. That is why in September ministers discussed the need to defend the Charter of the United Nations and the purposes and principles of NAM, and unanimously adopted a political declaration to initiate consultations with a view to establishing this important international day.

The Movement thanks all delegations that have constructively and actively participated in the process of negotiating the draft resolution that is before the Assembly today. The consensus text is the result of inclusive and transparent informal consultations among the States Members of the United Nations, following a process of mutual engagement that took into account the positions, concerns and aspirations of all delegations.

We thank all Member States that have decided to sponsor this important and timely draft resolution. We also recognize the Group of African States, the Group of Arab States, the Group of Asian and Pacific States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations,

the Caribbean Community, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other friendly delegations that expressed their support for this initiative from its inception.

As a reaffirmation of its principles and commitment to strengthening its role as an anti-war and peace-loving entity, the Movement has decided to submit this draft resolution under agenda item 15, "Culture of peace", in the belief that it will contribute to our joint efforts for peace, security, stability, sustainable development and the promotion of human rights.

We, the States members of NAM, are also convinced that an approach based on multilateralism and diplomacy reinforces the three pillars of the United Nations and that the proposed international day constitutes a means to promote the values of our Organization, to strengthen the faith of our peoples in the principles of our founding Charter, to reaffirm the validity of international law and to advance our common goal of achieving lasting peace.

We affirm our commitment, once the draft resolution is adopted, to promoting every 24 April — a historic day for our Movement — as the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace through educational activities and raising public awareness. We support the Office of the President of the General Assembly in its preparations for the high-level meeting to be held on 24 April 2019, with the participation of the Secretary-General, to inaugurate the proposed international day. We also take this opportunity to respectfully urge all Member States to participate in this event at the highest possible level.

In conclusion, I would like to convey the wish of the 120 member States of the Non-Aligned Movement and all the sponsors of draft resolution A/73/L.48 that it be adopted by consensus, taking into account the importance that the States Members of the United Nations attach to multilateralism and diplomacy for peace. In that way we can share our message of unity and cohesion with the world.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uzbekistan to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.52.

Mr. Ibragimov (Uzbekistan): Today I have the honour to present draft resolution A/73/L.52, entitled "Enlightenment and religious tolerance."

At the outset, I would like to thank all States Members of the United Nations for their active and constructive engagement, and for their valuable input during the informal consultations on this draft resolution.

Last year, during the general debate of the Assembly's seventy-second session, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, proposed the adoption of a draft resolution on education and religious tolerance (see A/72/PV.5), given the current challenges in ensuring tolerance among followers of different faiths in various parts of the globe.

His initiative was based on our country's centuries-old tradition and positive experience of ensuring the peaceful coexistence of representatives of various religions. In proposing that draft resolution, Uzbekistan sought to do its part for advancing interconfessional tolerance and harmony. The draft resolution is fully in line with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief and the relevant provisions of Assembly resolutions, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As President Mirziyoyev has outlined, the main goal of the draft resolution is

"to promote universal access to education and eradicate illiteracy and ignorance. It would be designed to promote tolerance and mutual respect, ensure religious freedom, protect the rights of believers and prevent discrimination against them" (A/72/PV.5, p. 16).

From Uzbekistan's perspective, the draft resolution is conducive to encouraging States Members of the United Nations and its relevant agencies to continue expanding activities in the field of public education, making efforts to improve curricula and focusing on promoting religious tolerance. The importance of adopting the draft resolution is also underpinned by the need to promote friendly relations and cooperation among States and to confront radicalism and extremism, issues of special relevance in today's world. In particular, the dynamic processes of globalization and the current profound transformation of the system of international relations challenge the global community in new ways.

Given that complex situation, strengthening mutual respect for cultural diversity and advancing

tolerance among people and representatives of different confessions are of vital importance and have an enormous effect on Member States. The draft resolution therefore seeks to protect freedom of thought, conscience and religion by teaching mutual understanding, tolerance, non-discrimination and respect in all matters relating to freedom of religion by promoting, in society at large, a broader understanding of the diversity of religions and beliefs and of the history, traditions, languages and cultures of the various religious groups.

It should be noted that the draft resolution specifically calls for promoting education while taking into account two important circumstances. First, the lack of access to quality education in today's world often leads to the radicalization of certain segments of society, especially among young people. Only by fostering education and encouraging the desire for knowledge and self-improvement among young people can we ensure prosperity and tolerance in our society. In that regard, the draft resolution underlines the key role of UNESCO in contributing to world peace by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture.

Secondly, in the contemporary world, a large-scale public awareness campaign for rejecting all manifestations of religious extremism acquires special significance. The draft resolution therefore highlights the valuable role of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in contributing to a more peaceful, socially inclusive world by promoting greater understanding and respect among civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs.

In conclusion, given the importance of ensuring interreligious tolerance and education for all, it is my country's sincere hope that the draft resolution will enjoy the unanimous support of all States Members of the United Nations, which I also encourage to become its sponsors. Uzbekistan, for its part, stands ready to cooperate closely with all Member States in the practical implementation of the draft resolution, which will contribute to ensuring interreligious harmony and advancing education, as well as reaching the targets of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.55.

Mr. Munir (Pakistan): I have the honour to present draft resolution A/73/L.55, entitled "Promotion of

interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace".

Since 2004, Pakistan, together with the Philippines, has been a proud facilitator of this annual resolution. Adopted by consensus by the General Assembly, it has evolved over the years into a significant document for promoting genuine and constructive dialogue across the cultural and religious divide. Introduced under the item "Culture of peace", in many ways it symbolizes the timeless aspirations behind the creation of the United Nations itself. While all of us, through our interactions and exchanges in the Organization, work as ambassadors of cross-cultural and religious dialogue, such resolutions are crucial reminders of the significance of endeavours that bring the peoples of the world together.

The world is at a crossroads. Questions that were considered settled decades ago have started resurfacing. The very need for collaborating and cooperating with one another as equal partners in this interconnected and interdependent world is being challenged. Multilateralism is facing an unprecedented assault from a new kind of populist nationalism based on a myopic world view. Xenophobia and Islamophobia are on the rise and diversity is increasingly considered a threat. Fear is being deployed openly as a tactic to sway public opinion. Suspicion and ignorance among various civilizations and religions are being exploited by demagogues, extremists and terrorists to further their interests and fuel discord and hatred.

It is therefore all the more important to reinforce our collective commitment to the ideals of peaceful coexistence and to strengthen it by encouraging peacemakers and bridge-builders in their work. We must also support efforts that promote healthy and productive dialogue and understanding among all religions and civilizations with a view to finding common ground and convergence of opinion. As they are based on eternal values that benefit humankind, religions and cultures have more in common than what divides them. We must build on those shared values. Our diversity remains our biggest asset. It enables us to appreciate that there is an intrinsic value and advantage in interacting with those who appear different or follow other religions or cultural traditions. But for that to happen, we all have to come together and join hands to eliminate prejudices, stereotypes and biases and engage in constructive dialogue. We also have to rethink our

perspectives in order to pursue our goals in a structured and all-inclusive manner.

This draft resolution does exactly that. It promotes interreligious and intercultural dialogue and encourages those working for peace, harmony, moderation, better understanding among people and a global cultural for peace. In that context, we also recognize the important work of UNESCO and the invaluable contribution of the United Nations Alliance for Civilization — they both do a remarkable job in promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue at the national, regional and international levels.

On behalf of the delegations of Pakistan and the Philippines, I would like to thank all Member States for taking an active part in the negotiations this year and enriching the text further with their invaluable input. We also appreciate those who have been able to join us as sponsors and hope that more will be able to do so now. By adopting this draft resolution, we hope that the General Assembly will send a strong message to those who attempt to take advantage of our differences.

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

At the outset, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his insightful report (A/73/391) and for UNESCO's valuable input. As the report aptly captures, we have a pressing need not only for peace but also for the collective commitment and action required to meet our shared global responsibility, particularly against the current global backdrop.

We also take this opportunity to thank Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Philippines for their efforts in facilitating the draft resolutions proposed under this item. In addition, we congratulate the representatives of Venezuela, who spoke on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Uzbekistan on presenting their respective initiatives. ASEAN is pleased to participate once again in this year's debate and share with the international community what it is doing to advance this noble endeavour.

Home to more than 600 million people, South-East Asia is blessed with a multitude of ethnicities, religions, languages and cultures. Indeed, promoting a culture of peace has been an intrinsic value of our Association since its establishment more than 50 years ago. ASEAN

continues to strongly uphold that notion through the implementation of the its Community Vision 2025, which encompasses our shared aspiration for a rules-based, inclusive, people-oriented, people-centred and resilient ASEAN community.

ASEAN is also committed to maintaining and promoting enduring peace, security and stability in the region, as well as to the peaceful resolution of disputes without resorting to the threat or use of force, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the ASEAN Charter, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and universally recognized principles of international law.

In line with the shifting global focus on prevention, in 2017 ASEAN adopted the Declaration on a Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society. The Declaration represents a paradigm shift in our mindset that will better enable us to comprehensively respond to challenges that hamper sustainable human and social development in the region. Among other things, it recognizes the need to support a culture of prevention across the three pillars of ASEAN and encapsulates six driving principles — first, promoting a culture of peace and intercultural understanding; secondly, promoting a culture of respect for all; thirdly, promoting a culture of good governance at all levels; fourthly, promoting a culture of resilience and care for the environment; fifthly, promoting a culture of leading a healthy lifestyle; and sixthly, promoting a culture of supporting the values of moderation.

We believe that ASEAN's initiative to promote a culture of prevention complements the culture of sustainable peace and the prevention agenda at the United Nations, and we look forward to closer cooperation with the Organization in jointly developing project initiatives to promote a culture of prevention.

ASEAN also places great emphasis on quality education and inculcating the values of togetherness, harmony and tolerance from a very young age. We have several initiatives in that regard, such as the ASEAN Youth Volunteer Programme, a dedicated volunteer platform for young people that supports the exchange of learning experiences, seeks to develop capacities and enhance cross-cultural understanding and good neighbourliness and fosters a sense of shared responsibility.

Furthermore, we were happy to participate in the convening of the second ASEAN Youth Interfaith Camp in Indonesia last month, which brought together a religiously and culturally diverse group of young people from the region to participate in dialogue, discussions and seminars. There is certainly much interest in making that a recurring project, and we encourage the international community, in particular our dialogue partners, to collaborate with ASEAN in supporting that initiative.

ASEAN commends the work of various regional and international organizations, notably the United Nations, for promoting a culture of peace and stressing the importance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Given that next year marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, the convening in September of the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace was timely and afforded participants the opportunity to exchange views on ways to further promote a culture of peace.

We welcome the invaluable role of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in promoting intercultural dialogue, greater understanding and respect among civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs. ASEAN appreciates the role played by Turkey and Spain, as the sponsors of the Alliance, at its eighth Global Forum, held recently in New York. The Secretary-General's strong support of that initiative is also much appreciated. Finally, we want to acknowledge the dedicated service and outstanding contribution made to the Alliance by the outgoing High Representative.

ASEAN continues to support efforts by UNESCO, including through its action plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022). We are pleased to note the emphasis on harnessing the potential of the media to foster mutual understanding and respect, tolerance and cooperation, as well as the involvement of youth and women in cultivating a culture of peace.

In conclusion, ASEAN remains steadfast in its commitment to upholding a culture of peace, as enshrined in our founding principles and Charter, and will continue to play an active role in that endeavour. We stand ready to work alongside all regional and international partners and complement the work of the United Nations to that end.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation has taken note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/391) on the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, which reviews progress in the reporting period on preventing conflict and maintaining peace, as well as the measures taken at the level of the United Nations system.

The concept of a culture of peace has been closely linked to the United Nations Organization since its inception in 1945. The Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations states:

“We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war... and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights”.

UNESCO has also played a crucial role in the inclusion of issues related to peace and a culture of peace in all its programmes and regular activities, in line with its Constitution, which states that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”. In addition, in its resolution 53/243 of 6 October 1999, on a culture of peace, the General Assembly provided guidelines for Governments, international organizations and civil society that can be used to support and foster a culture of peace. The link between culture and peace has therefore become established as a new concept in peacebuilding.

We all know that peace involves reconciliation between two parties in the presence of harmony and the absence of hatred. In that regard, peace is a state of harmony, security and stability in the family, society and the whole world, since it contributes to prosperity for all. We must work to realize the three concepts of peace: peacemaking — helping the parties to a conflict to reach a negotiated agreement; peacekeeping — preventing parties from relapsing into conflict; and peacebuilding — creating the necessary conditions for societies to live in peace. That involves work on many levels, such as educating people about human rights, achieving economic development, increasing aid and realizing social solidarity.

Fostering a culture of peace requires that we work together, shoulder to shoulder, to combat intellectual extremism in all of its forms and manifestations, such as the exclusion of others and incitement to violence. It requires educating our young people and nurturing

our educational institutions. The role of the media and modern technical means must also be revitalized.

The concept of peace does not mean merely putting an end to war. As I have said before, it is an ongoing process that must be based on a set of values and principles for the creation of a culture of peace that brings stability to human societies and constitutes a source of power and prosperity.

We all know that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a commitment to strengthening peaceful and inclusive societies. It stresses that sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace and security, which is why we must work together to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16 and ensure that inclusive and participatory decisions are made at all levels with a view to achieving sustainable development. We emphasize that Governments, the international community and local communities should work together to implement lasting solutions to end violence, achieve justice and guarantee the participation of all.

The promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace does not mean fusing religions and faiths or even cultures. Rather, a culture of peace is the sphere within which people's religions and cultures coexist. The aim of dialogue among civilizations is to study and address the root causes of their differences and to humbly learn the ethics of tolerating those differences.

Advancing a culture of peace is a process that requires belief and freedom of thought and expression, as well as the eradication of poverty and unemployment and fostering public awareness about the peacemaking process. It is impossible to instil a culture of peace and non-violence in people who are deprived of their most basic right to a decent life. My country calls from this rostrum for the Assembly to respect and apply such rights in order to create a better world that will include all of us, a world that enjoys friendliness, tolerance and peace.

In conclusion, I thank all Member States that submitted draft resolutions calling for the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, which will foster the principles of tolerance and respect for cultural diversity as a means to prevent the outbreak of conflicts.

Mr. Mohammad (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/73/391), which contains information on topics and actions undertaken by key United Nations entities in order to promote a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace. My country also commends all the efforts, good offices and pivotal role of UNESCO in strengthening and consolidating a culture of peace, culminating in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace and the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022).

More than ever before, the world today is facing increasingly complex threats and challenges at all levels — State, societal and even individual — including challenges and threats that undermine and threaten the spread of a culture of peace. Regrettably, disputes and conflicts are sometimes fuelled by intolerance, extremism, violence and religious and ethnic tensions, owing to, among other things, the rejection of others, intolerance, exclusion and a lack of awareness of the need to coexist. Some have been using violent extremism as a means of expression. Such acts prompt us to make concerted efforts at the local, regional and international levels to achieve the goal to which we all aspire, namely, to transform the culture of hatred, intolerance and war into one of dialogue, coexistence and peace. In that context, Sustainable Development Goal 16 represents a compass and a road map for all countries and societies to achieve that goal, which calls for establishing inclusive and peaceful societies for all. As peace and development are interrelated, promoting a culture of peace and dialogue among societies and religions is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The report of the Secretary-General highlights important tools and means for contributing to the achievement of peace, such as preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, mediation and dialogue. In that regard, we call on Member States and international and regional organizations to redouble their efforts to operationalize such preventive tools and measures, which aim to prevent conflicts by tackling them as soon as they emerge and determining their root causes. Preventive diplomacy, mediation and the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means are fundamental pillars of Kuwaiti foreign policy. Applying those tools has been

a priority for the State of Kuwait during its current membership on the Security Council.

A culture of peace is deeply entrenched in my country. One of the articles of the Kuwaiti Constitution explicitly states that peace is the goal of the State. In the State of Kuwait, we have fostered freedom and a culture of tolerance and coexistence as a means of developing our society. The Constitution of the State of Kuwait enshrines those values and concepts in its articles, which set forth the rights and duties of every citizen, irrespective of their ethnicity, origin, language or religion. The Constitution also stresses that justice, freedom and equality are the pillars of our society and that cooperation and compassion forge a strong bond among citizens.

The State of Kuwait is ranked highest among Middle East and North African countries on the 2018 Global Peace Index, reflecting my country's faith in a culture of peace, which was deeply rooted in Kuwaiti society even before the emergence of our modern State. That culture includes tolerance, the acceptance of others and dialogue among different cultures and religions. Our history shows many examples of rapprochement with and openness towards different peoples and civilizations. In our modern era, those values have been translated into our Constitution, which guarantees the right to freedom of speech, freedom of belief and freedom of practicing religious rituals, in complete liberty and safety.

The State of Kuwait is considered an amalgam of different peoples, embracing people of many different nationalities, religions and cultures who enjoy security, stability, mutual respect and a dignified life.

In conclusion, my country's delegation stresses the importance of intensifying our efforts to promote a culture of peace, reinvigorate the dialogue among civilizations, disseminate the values of moderation, tolerance and mutual respect and renounce extremism, hatred and violence in all its forms and manifestations. That is a responsibility that must be shouldered by all Member States and that requires us to work together through our multilateral system.

Ms. Al Daah (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): A culture of peace is not a new concept for us. Our shared values call for tolerance, respect and appreciation for individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, culture or ideology. That is a fundamental principle of the Muslim, Christian and

Jewish faiths and others. The United Nations is working to enhance a culture of peace. It represents a forum in which we celebrate the differences that enrich our human civilizations and the multiplicity of our cultures. United Nations principles are based on strengthening friendly inter-State relations while promoting dialogue and understanding among peoples and nations in order to unite international efforts to achieve peace throughout the world.

Despite the progress that has been made in this area, the world is now in dire need of intensified international efforts to disseminate a culture of peace and dialogue among religions and civilizations, because we are facing the dangerous threat posed by extremist and terrorist groups that seek to achieve their destructive goals through hatred and sectarianism among individuals. Those groups try to destroy human and civilized values and cultural heritage in order to establish a culture based on violence and extremism.

Since its founding, my country has realized that building strong and coherent societies and stable and secure States requires strengthening the values of tolerance, respect and the acceptance of other people. We recall the late Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, leader and founder of the United Arab Emirates, whose 100th birthday we are celebrating this year, who fostered human and compassionate values and whose just principles and wise leadership left a great legacy for successive Emirati generations, which they have emulated in our country's domestic and foreign relations. There are representatives of more than 200 nationalities living in my country today in peace and harmony.

Based on that, the United Arab Emirates has become a centre of tolerance and rapprochement among religions and global civilizations. We have embraced mosques, churches and many other houses of worship so as to enable all to practice their religions. In order to entrench a culture of tolerance among religions, my country gave the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Mosque in Abu Dhabi the name Mary the Mother of Jesus Mosque. We held the first World Tolerance Summit in November, chaired by the State Minister for Tolerance, which was attended by 1,500 representatives from Governments, media, cultural and academic organizations, as well as peace experts and religious leaders from around the world. I would like to take this opportunity to announce that Pope Francis, a world symbol of peace and tolerance, will visit Abu Dhabi in

February to participate in an international interreligious dialogue entitled “Human brotherhood”.

My country is a sponsor of the draft resolutions (A/73/L.43, A/73/L.48, A/73/L.52 and A/73/L.55) to be adopted under today’s agenda item, based on our belief in their importance in spreading a culture of peace. In that regard, we would like to recommend taking the following fundamental steps to promote a culture of peace, in line with respect for the principles established by the Charter of the United Nations.

First, national, regional and international strategies must be put in place to promote peace and tolerance among peoples. We stress that those strategies must be inclusive, in order to address the root causes of extremism, while ensuring that every sector of society, especially minorities, can enjoy protection from crimes such as those committed against the Yazidi and Rohingya peoples.

Secondly, specialized agencies must be established to implement those strategies. For example, my country hosted the Council of Muslim Sages and the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies in order to engage religious leaders in promoting a culture of peace. The Sawab Centre in Abu Dhabi is intended to combat extremist thought and foster a culture of peace and tolerance. And the International Institute for Tolerance supports those values in the Arab world.

Thirdly, relevant legislation must be adopted, such as the United Arab Emirates law to combat discrimination and hatred, which criminalizes discrimination against individuals or groups of people based on religion, sect, ethnicity, colour or origin, while fighting the exploitation of religion through takfir.

Lastly, there must be innovative initiatives to promote a culture of peace and openness among all generations of young people. In that regard, we should focus on curriculums and school programmes that play a crucial role in instilling awareness in future generations so that they can confront extremism. My country has initiated the Mohammed Bin Rashid Tolerance Award with the aim of producing young Arab leaders in tolerance-related areas to support cultural and media initiatives designed to entrench tolerance as a value in the Arab world.

In conclusion, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime

Minister of the United Arab Emirates, said at the inauguration of the Louvre Museum in Abu Dhabi:

“Welcome to a dome of enlightenment in a region where people of dark thoughts are attempting to bring back the eras of backwardness and ignorance”.

Mrs. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): As we approach the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 53/243, Cuba reiterates the validity of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, as well as our commitment to that agenda and multilateralism. First and foremost, the international community’s efforts to achieve peace must focus on full respect for the principles of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-interference in matters strictly under their domestic jurisdiction, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The root causes of conflicts, including extreme poverty, hunger, inequality, exclusion and a lack of access to quality health and education services, must be eliminated immediately. Understanding, tolerance, solidarity and respect for the cultures, histories, religions and the specificities of every nation must be promoted.

Despite the continued international call to achieve and strengthen a culture of peace, problems hindering and undermining the real possibilities of achieving such a noble goal persist. They include the covert promotion of regime change in developing countries; certain States’ violation of principles of international law; the use or threat of use of force, which runs contrary to the Charter of the United Nations; the development of new, more lethal and extremely sophisticated weapons, including the continued existence of large nuclear arsenals; unilateral coercive measures; and intolerance and discrimination based on ethnic, religious or racial grounds. All of that must end. A culture of peace also requires the unwavering condemnation of all acts, methods and practices of terrorism, as well as concrete action to combat that scourge, regardless of the form it takes and who perpetrates it, including terrorism perpetrated by States. Nor do manipulative policies and double standards on issues such as human rights, aimed at singling out developing countries and discrediting their legitimate Governments, contribute to the ideal of a culture of peace. The Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, adopted in 2014 in Havana during the second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, demonstrated

our region's commitment to strengthening peace and negotiated solutions to conflicts and differences, as well as representing a contribution to the culture of peace at the international level. We therefore reaffirm its full force and effect.

We take this opportunity to express Cuba's gratitude and support for the draft resolutions (A/73/L.43, A/73/L.48, A/73/L.52 and A/73/L.55) presented under this agenda item. They are all very relevant. We note in particular draft resolution A/73/L.48, on an international day of multilateralism and diplomacy for peace, introduced by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. That initiative demonstrates the firm commitment of the Movement's members and observers to fostering peace, understanding and mutual respect among nations. We count on everyone's support for its adoption.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): The natural form of human culture is peace, not war. For every one of us to live a normal life, we have to communicate with other human beings with love and compassion. Governments, individuals, civil-society organizations and international organizations, including the United Nations system, can work individually and collectively to restore that natural human relationship, cultivate the values of respect, promote mutual understanding and cherish our shared human identity.

Yet those ideals and the principles that underpin the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, adopted by the General Assembly in 1999, are under threat. Innocent women and men, girls and boys are attacked because of their ethnicity or religion. The Declaration rightly puts enormous faith in the power of education, propelled by an extraordinary level of political commitment to overcoming such challenges. We are quite encouraged to observe, based on the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/391), the progress that UNESCO has made, especially in incorporating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals in its programme of work to promote a culture of peace. We encourage UNESCO to work more closely with Governments and education providers in various countries to ensure that the knowledge that is being transferred to students is founded on the values of inclusivity, tolerance and respect. It is important to ensure that the creative minds of children and young people are taught to recognize and appreciate the mutual dependence whereby we

naturally rely on one another rather than the factors that divide us.

Maldives believes that we must work to overcome the challenges that countries face in maintaining a continued focus on the Declaration on a Culture of Peace. Among the most important relevant challenges, especially for small island developing States such as Maldives, is climate-induced threats. Vulnerable populations and their cultural heritage, which make up a significant part of the global tapestry of diversity, require security. The changing climate, which the disasters we have experienced in recent years have made apparent, puts the sustainability of a culture of peace at risk.

The media, especially social media, represent an important platform for disseminating information. At the same time, we have a collective responsibility to ensure that advances in technology are used to increase awareness and educate, not incite hatred and intolerance. The Maldives condemns all attempts to promote violent extremism and terrorist activities. Terrorism is the antithesis of a culture of peace, and therefore we must take a stand against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations with full conviction.

The newly elected President of Maldives, Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, believes that cultivating a culture of peace requires a policy shift towards tolerance, respect, acceptance and unity. That includes respect for democratic values and principles that can foster a culture of peace while eliminating all forms of prejudices, discrimination and marginalization. At the international level, it involves ending coercive measures to resolve conflict and overcoming issues through negotiations and dialogue. My Government hopes that today's discussions and the draft resolutions (A/73/L.43, A/73/L.48, A/73/L.52 and A/73/L.55) that we are about to adopt will help strengthen our faith and efforts in promoting the values and principles in the Declaration on a Culture of Peace so that we can create a more tolerant global society for a more harmonious and peaceful world for generations to come.

Mr. Elnour (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to thank the Secretary-General for his report before us (A/73/391). I also thank the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh for facilitating the negotiations on draft resolution A/73/L.43, to be adopted today.

We also want to express our thanks and appreciation to UNESCO for its leading role in consolidating a culture of peace and coordinating

efforts by United Nations agencies, programmes and all other international partners in this vital domain. This is an increasingly important area, given the growing problems of xenophobia, targeting migrants and refugees, Islamophobia and populist rhetoric in many parts of the world. If we do not take measures to address them as soon as possible, they will damage the future of peace and security throughout the world.

We also want to note the importance of providing the necessary support to developing countries so that they can build their national capabilities in areas directly related to a culture of peace, strengthening national unity and implementing the eight action areas of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, with a view to leaving no one behind in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. It is important to note that developing nations are the countries most affected by armed conflict, and some face great challenges in managing diversity. It is therefore important to implement intensive programmes on a culture of peace, with the aim of strengthening the values of tolerance, respect for others and peaceful coexistence as a firm foundation for sustainable peace in the future. We must also work together in order to enable those States to benefit from the tremendous communication and information technology revolution and the great opportunities for enhancing a culture of peace and tolerance, as opposed to using such modern technology to promote xenophobia, reject the other and advance stereotypes.

The Sudan firmly believes that preventing wars and silencing guns are a first step necessary to promote a culture of peace, especially in countries dealing with internal conflicts. My country has made tireless efforts to achieve peace and security in neighbouring countries. Mediation undertaken by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and led by my country culminated on 12 September in the signing of the Revitalized Peace Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. My country is also making tireless efforts within the framework of the African Union (AU) to achieve peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic. In that regard, my delegation would like to express its hope for support from all the relevant parties and the AU. On 29 November, my country hosted a meeting of Foreign Ministers of Libya's neighbours to advance the peace process in that brother country, and that was on top of efforts that we undertook with Chad, Libya and the

Niger with a view to securing Libya's southern border. We hope those efforts will be successful in terms of achieving peace and stability in our sister State of Libya.

With respect to completing the peace process in the Sudan, my Government is continuing its tireless and intensive efforts to resume negotiations with the armed movements in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. We hope that African mediation efforts and those of all our other partners will come to fruition and help to promote a culture of peace. We are also making efforts to extend the ceasefire in order to ensure an environment conducive to holding political negotiations and facilitating humanitarian work.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to stress that a culture of peace at the international level can be established and strengthened only in a world where there is strict commitment to the principles of international law and respect for the Charter of the United Nations, one where conflicts are resolved through peaceful means and preventive diplomacy, while avoiding double standards in international politics, respecting human rights and eschewing political manipulation.

Mr. Al Shuaibi (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): The report of the Secretary-General (A/73/391) on the activities of United Nations entities to promote a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue stresses the importance of preventive diplomacy and adapting the concepts of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The efforts of UNESCO and other organizations noted in the report faced significant challenges from issues such as increased migration, growing populations and technological advances, highlighting the fact that intercultural and interreligious dialogue are more important than ever.

The Sultanate of Oman has a diverse heritage of culture and civilization. Historically, the people of Oman have communicated with peoples all over the world and have promoted peace through their dealings and ethical behaviour, especially maritime voyages, which imbued our people with diverse cultural experiences and confidence in their values, enabling Oman to establish strong partnerships with countries around the world. We have also benefited from our unique geographic location, which has helped us strengthen our foreign relations and support regional and international peace.

Based on our firm positions, as established by Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, the State of Oman has been able to build the right foundations for tolerance and

coexistence within Omani society, promoting them through an inclusive development policy in all areas of society, while consolidating legal, educational and media values and giving human values sustainability and depth at the individual and societal levels. Omani people have therefore been encouraged to be open and respectful of other peoples while maintaining their personal Omani culture, of which they are proud.

With regard to the concept of intercultural dialogue, the Sultanate of Oman has adopted several measures to make its successful experience known abroad. That includes, for example, a series of exhibitions entitled "The Message of Islam from Oman". Many scientific chairs and fellowships have also been established in numerous world-renowned universities. There are now 16 Sultan Qaboos Scientific Chairs so far, teaching about Arab and Islamic cultures and their relationship to other cultures and religions.

Regarding other Government actions, the National Omani Commission for Education, Culture and Science is launching an international initiative to foster communication between cultures designed to enable young people from around the world to meet in our country and conduct a cultural dialogue aimed at promoting the concepts of tolerance and acceptance of others. The Sultanate of Oman also annually invites a number of students from other countries to teach them Arabic, part of a policy of introducing young people to other cultures and languages.

With regard to international relations, our firm policies are based on the concepts of mutual respect, good-neighbourliness and the promotion of justice and international legitimacy and non-interference in the affairs of other countries so as to foster international peace and security.

In conclusion, we thank all the countries that have submitted draft resolutions on a culture of peace, all of which we emphatically support.

Mr. Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the adoption of the annual draft resolution contained in document A/73/L.43, on the follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which highlights the important inclusion of the promotion of a culture of peace in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As always, we thank the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh for its efforts to facilitate the draft resolution.

El Salvador believes that safeguarding and promoting historical memory and a culture of peace is a decisive element in building a tolerant society capable of harmonious coexistence. It also offers a wide range of possibilities and capacities for promoting a comprehensive transformation aimed at achieving an inclusive society, especially where historically excluded population groups are concerned.

The draft resolution highlights the contribution of early-childhood development to the development of more peaceful societies. In that regard, one of my Government's objectives is to ensure not only that girls and boys complete primary and secondary education, but also that they emerge with relevant and effective academic results, including an appreciation for coexistence and a culture of peace.

Our country highlights the important role played by women and young people in contributing to prevention and conflict resolution in peacebuilding, as evident in our national promotion of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015), on the role of women and youth in peace and security, on which my country has made progress in establishing national plans and committees.

We greatly appreciate the call in the draft resolution that we are about to adopt for ensuring that the United Nations peacebuilding architecture continues to promote post-conflict consolidation activities and achieving sustainable peace. At the national level, El Salvador, both as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the General Assembly, actively participated in this year's negotiations on the peace and security pillar reforms proposed by the Secretary-General.

This draft resolution is becoming a frame of reference for the implementation of actions and decision-making in countries such as mine that have moved from conflict towards peace. In El Salvador we reached a predominantly political peace agreement that enabled us to end our conflict, but today, 26 years after that feat, we realize that a political agreement is not enough, and that a national socioeconomic agreement that includes all sectors of the population is essential.

My Government recognizes the importance of building a culture of peace in the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With regard to SDG 16, El Salvador has already joined a global working alliance through which, between 2015 and

October of this year, we reduced the homicide rate in our country by 27 per cent. We did that by implementing policies, plans and institutions for safety and security and peaceful coexistence among our citizens, while giving women a leading role, deepening alliances with non-State actors and increasing statistical capacities.

As part of creating an inclusive and participative society, we believe it is important to develop and establish strong institutions aimed at disseminating and promoting a culture of access to information and Government accountability. We have established a secretariat for active transparency in order to promote initiatives to reduce all forms of corruption and bribery.

We would obviously like to highlight UNESCO's work in mobilizing actors and synergies in support of a culture of peace, and we consider it important to ensure that all Member States support UNESCO in playing an active role in implementing a culture of peace and its linkages with the various targets and Goals of the 2030 Agenda, as well as in the related events taking place here in New York. In that regard, we also want to highlight paragraph 16 of draft resolution A/73/L.43, and to reiterate to the President of the Assembly our recommendation that we convene a high-level forum dedicated to the implementation of the Programme of Action in September 2019, as part of its follow-up and ties to the sustainable development frameworks in force since 2015.

Mr. Suan (Myanmar): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/73/391), and UNESCO for its valuable input.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

We would also like to express our appreciation to all delegations that have taken the initiative to present draft resolutions under this agenda item.

Building peace and national reconciliation are the most important tasks that the Government and the people of Myanmar are undertaking today to ensure the rule of law, stability, democracy and development in our country. A series of 21st Century Panglong Peace Conferences is being held to forge lasting peace. The Conferences seek to put an end to the armed strife that has ravaged Myanmar since it became an independent nation in 1948, and to build a democratic federal union founded on lasting unity created out of diversity. Our

national experience has taught us that the road to peace has never been an easy path to tread, but that it is the only way that will lead to our long-held aspiration of a peaceful and prosperous nation. We believe in a culture of dialogue for reconciling differences, building trust and confidence and pursuing lasting peace and sustainable development for all.

Myanmar is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. It is home to 135 officially recognized ethnic groups, each with its own distinctive culture and adherence to different faiths. As a multireligious country, where faithful followers of all four major religions live in peace and harmony, freedom of religion and the right to preserve one's cultural identity and heritage are guaranteed by the Constitution. The promotion of interfaith dialogue plays a vital role in creating a culture of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding among people from diverse religions and cultures. We have established interfaith friendship groups at the national level, with more than 100 subgroups across the country. Interfaith dialogues, awareness talks and combined prayer services for peace and national reconciliation have been held all over the country.

Recently, on 1 November, we held a Religions for Peace Advisory Forum on National Reconciliation and Peace in Myanmar at the highest national level in order to promote peace among religions. At the meeting, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi highlighted interfaith dialogue as a vital path to peace, saying that we must promote interfaith dialogue and that respect and understanding for religious and cultural diversity contribute to lasting peace and security. She went on to emphasize that for interfaith dialogue to be truly effective, it should not be limited to religious leaders but should extend to all, so that it results in a meeting of hearts and minds. She also emphasized the importance of addressing education, which is essential in overcoming prejudices, stereotyping, mistrust and discrimination. Through education we can promote a culture of peace that ensures mutual respect.

We see today how in many parts of the world religion is being misused by extremists to justify violence and acts of terrorism. Intolerance and religious extremism are extremely damaging to sustaining peace and harmony in a diverse society. We must address the root causes of violent extremism. The terrorist attacks committed by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, which began in October 2016 and recurred

on 25 August 2017 in northern Rakhine state, have triggered an immense humanitarian problem that has affected innocent people of all religions. Today peace and reconciliation are urgently needed in Rakhine state. In fact, for my Government the rule of law and development in Rakhine are among its highest priorities in addressing long-neglected, fundamental issues of fear, anger, frustration and poverty in the region. We believe in finding constructive and sustainable ways to build harmony and trust among all communities and bring about peace and prosperity for all in Rakhine.

Sustainable peace is not simply the absence of conflict. The presence of values and beliefs in our hearts will strengthen peace and reconciliation. In this increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, we must all work together in partnership for peace and development through dialogue on a basis of equality and mutual respect.

Sustainable peace is essential for sustainable development. Peace and development are two sides of the same coin. Only by promoting a culture of peace will it be possible to create peace and harmony among diverse communities and societies, thereby creating a conducive environment and favourable conditions for sustainable development. I am confident that through dialogue and by fostering closer cooperation among different faiths, we will be able to build a global culture of peace that will ensure that our world is a better place, with a better future for succeeding generations.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): The efforts of the international community to promote a culture of peace have gained strong impetus from the relevant annual resolutions of the General Assembly, which have proclaimed fundamental principles and commitments and defined a set of actions at the national, regional and global levels.

Azerbaijan supports draft resolutions A/73/L.43, A/73/L.48, A/73/L.52 and A/73/L.55, and looks forward to their adoption by consensus. We thank the delegations of Bangladesh, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and the Philippines for their skilful efforts and leadership in facilitating the negotiations on the draft resolutions and for their strong commitment to promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the world's natural and cultural diversity and recognizes that all cultures and civilizations can

contribute to sustainable development and are crucial to enabling it. The promotion of a culture of peace is also important in the context of addressing conflicts. Azerbaijan fully supports the Secretary-General's efforts aimed at preventing conflicts, responding early and effectively to crisis situations, assisting Member States in their endeavours to sustain peace and build resilient and prosperous societies and making the United Nations more coherent, integrated, effective and efficient.

We note the leading role of UNESCO and the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in promoting intercultural dialogue, and we commend the cooperation in that area between the United Nations and regional and other organizations. Azerbaijan considers the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue at the national and international levels to be of major importance. In recent years, my country has hosted a number of results-oriented international events and put forward important initiatives to encourage dialogue and mutual understanding.

Among them is the Baku Process, successfully implemented under the leadership of Azerbaijan, which provides a large-scale platform for the exchange of knowledge on interreligious and intercultural dialogue. In the Secretary-General's report on the topic submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session (A/72/488), he specifically mentioned the important role of the Baku Process in advocating for dialogue among cultures. The Process marks its tenth anniversary this year, with the high-level sixth Baku International Humanitarian Forum held earlier this year with the participation of Governments, international organizations, scholars, young people and civil society.

An integral part of the Baku Process is the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, organized biennially by Azerbaijan in cooperation with several international organizations. We welcome the reference to the World Forum as a key global platform for promoting intercultural dialogue made in resolution 72/136, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace", and in draft resolution A/73/L.55, to be adopted today.

In the Secretary-General's report on the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/73/391), submitted to the General Assembly at its

seventy-third session, he also noted the contribution of the Government of Azerbaijan to the development by UNESCO of its e-platform aimed at serving as an international hub to facilitate networking among different stakeholders working in the field of intercultural dialogue.

Continued support from the United Nations and the broader international community for successful initiatives on intercultural dialogue, a culture of peace and multiculturalism is essential to building peaceful and inclusive societies, overcoming stereotypes and misconceptions and implementing development frameworks and policies. The Republic of Azerbaijan is keen to continue its efforts towards promoting mutual understanding, respect for diversity and enhanced cooperation to that end.

Mr. Arrocha Ruíz (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to make a general statement on agenda item 15, entitled “Culture of peace”, and in that regard, I want to begin by welcoming the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/391) entitled “Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”.

As we continue the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), whose efforts are led by UNESCO, it is worth reflecting on our current global context. Although the United Nations has promoted a series of measures aimed at promoting a culture of peace, the complex reality of conflicts in various parts of the world that threaten international peace and security demonstrates the importance of focusing on adjusting our approach. Consequently, as we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, the international community must work actively to renew its global commitment undertaken in 1999, in order to entrench a culture of sustainable peace built on a set of values, attitudes, traditions, behaviours and lifestyles based on respect, non-violence, the promotion of human rights, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, the protection of the environment, development, gender equity and freedom of expression and information, among other things.

As we have noted before, a culture of peace represents the very essence of our Organization and cuts across the three pillars that guide the work of the United Nations — sustainable development, peace and security and human rights. We therefore agree

that collective efforts for peacebuilding, through a preventive approach, are fundamental to promoting the inclusion of all actors in our society and ensuring that multilateralism attains its full significance.

Today’s threats to peace are not minor. Our complex global reality is also challenged by climate change, migration and terrorism, among other issues of concern to the international community, because they threaten our peoples’ lives. For that reason, addressing the causes of conflicts and putting into practice the principles of non-violence are objectives that have now become ever more important.

Panama welcomes the draft resolutions (A/73/L.43, A/73/L.48, A/73/L.52 and A/73/L.55) to be adopted today in the context of the debate under the item “Culture of peace”, as they essentially promote knowledge of, and respect for, cultural diversity in all its forms — tolerance, solidarity, equality and non-discrimination. In that regard, and in line with the Secretary-General’s approach outlined in his report, my country recognizes the role that women and young people can play in peace negotiations, conflict prevention and especially in the consolidation of post-conflict processes.

As a multi-ethnic and multicultural country, Panama has unwavering respect for cultural and religious diversity, as well as for intercultural and interreligious dialogue, and it is with that vision that in January next year we are honoured to be hosting World Youth Day, to be attended by Pope Francis. Panama will open its doors to receive young people from all over the world in the quest to achieve our shared and paramount objective of a culture of peace, thereby overcoming religious and cultural barriers.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate Panama’s commitment to observing human rights, the security and freedom of the individual, the promotion of conflict prevention, peace and security and engagement in dialogue and consensus-building as true catalysts for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace.

Mr. Mamdouhi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would first like to commend the President and her predecessors for effectively pursuing the implementation of this important mandate, with which she has been entrusted by General Assembly resolutions, to further following up on realizing a culture of peace, promoting multilateralism and contributing to establishing a world against violence and violent extremism.

This kind of meeting undoubtedly provides us with an unparalleled opportunity to consider urgent challenges and highlight emerging trends that have an impact on the realization of a culture of peace, enable stakeholders to exchange views on how to further promote and sustain peace through multilateralism and find further sound and decent solutions to the existing challenges in that regard.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), especially NAM's proposal to designate an international day of multilateralism and diplomacy for peace. I would like to briefly highlight a number of issues of particular importance.

We are witnessing how the current global scenario presents great challenges in the areas of peace and security. Existing, new and emerging threats and challenges at the international and regional levels continue to impede efforts by States to promote peace and security. Undoubtedly, one of those major threats is a growing resort to unilateralism.

Today, as the Secretary-General has rightly said, the world order is increasingly chaotic, democratic principles are under siege, the rule of law is being undermined and multilateralism is under fire, precisely when we need it most. In fact, unilaterally imposed measures, the use or threat of use of force and unilateral coercive sanctions as a means to achieve national policy objectives have emerged in the wake of obvious failings in the multilateral system and equitable world order.

Moreover, the launching of unilateral military invasions, a willingness to ignore historical facts on the ground and the rising threats of terrorism and violent extremism, which are the root causes of every crisis in the Middle East, are the sum effects of unilateralism. It cannot be ignored that withdrawing from international organizations, especially UNESCO and the Human Rights Council, as well as from international agreements such as the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the Iran nuclear deal, are among other typical instances of a me-first, self-centred policy that flows from unilateralism.

Threatening States' sovereignty, independence and freedom of trade and investment and preventing them from exercising their right to decide their own political, economic and social systems by their own free will are policies that do not work anymore. A me-first policy

might work at first but in the end is doomed to failure. In that respect, challenges to peace must be directly addressed at their root causes. We must therefore shift to a new, democratic and balanced approach.

If we are to handle the serious current challenges at the global level effectively, multilateralism is not just an option, it is the only option, and of course it is a viable and realistic one. It is the only realistic and practical option for addressing global challenges collectively and pursuing common international goals cooperatively. The reason is simple. Certain transnational challenges and threats, such as terrorism, know no boundaries. It is therefore not possible for a single country or countries, however powerful, to address them.

We must promote true, effective and strong multilateralism. We must ensure that it is founded on inclusion rather than exclusion, cooperation rather than confrontation, equality rather than inequality, the rule of law rather than the rule of power. We must solve differences peacefully and justly, not violently and unfairly. We must also pursue the common good of all States, not the goals of one State or group of States. Nor should we forget that in order to promote multilateralism, we must build on the important milestones we have achieved, and prevent our past disastrous mistakes and tragedies from ever recurring.

We should not allow self-centred unilateral policies to be pursued at the price of weakening multilateralism. We cannot and should not allow that highly alarming trend to continue unabated if we want our world to be governed by law and not the rule of power, and if we want to remain a true United Nations — nations united for peace and for saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We should therefore address the chronic and emerging challenges to multilateralism comprehensively and seriously and create a reformed, strong, effective and reinvigorated multilateral system founded on the rule of law, justice, equality and accountability.

Given that the United Nations, as the world's most representative international organization, represents the highest expression of multilateralism, our efforts to achieve a strengthened multilateral system should start from this Organization. That is how we can make the United Nations relevant to all people, which is the theme of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, during which many world leaders have called for support to multilateralism and for strengthening the

role of the United Nations. That is what we need today in our highly interconnected and interdependent global village, where the nature, gravity, complexity and scope of challenges are unprecedented. That is what we need to do together, resolutely and responsibly. It is our common responsibility.

In conclusion, I want to take this opportunity to emphasize that the Islamic Republic of Iran, as initiator of the concept of a world against violence and extremism, stands ready to cooperate in fulfilling that responsibility. We are fully prepared to play an active part in promoting multilateralism as the appropriate framework for providing sustainable methods to resolve existing challenges.

Ms. Lahmiri (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is pleased to be participating in the debate on a culture of peace, a universal value that my country is fully committed to. We note with satisfaction the annual report of the Secretary-General (A/73/391) on the issue, and we thank the various facilitators for the draft resolutions on it that we will be adopting this morning.

Because we live in a world that is constantly changing, we must adapt to it through appropriate common responses. The growing number of ideological conflicts and increasing intolerance, cultural isolationism, violence and extremism challenge us all and must push us to take effective collective action. Morocco considers diversity a source of wealth and is determined to implement innovative methods to ensure respect for cultural and faith-based pluralism. In that regard, we have undertaken tangible action at the national, regional and international levels. For example, at the national level we have undertaken religious reform, including of our religious education system, and a review of the religious content of school textbooks.

We believe firmly that education is a key tool in ensuring that the culture of peace can grow in the minds of men and women. We promote an enlightened, moderate religious education based on the value of tolerance. with a view to preventing radicalism, we provide an education that promotes peace. In that framework, Morocco is training imams, murshidins and murshidats who are called on to exercise their duties in Morocco and abroad, both in Africa and Europe. That commitment was translated into reality by the establishment in 2015 of the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams, Murshidins and Murshidats.

I should point out in that regard that the commitment of young people and women is essential to fighting radicalization, violence and extremism, as well as to promoting tolerance and respect for others.

The second point that we want to focus on concerns dialogue, which can be local, national, regional or global. A culture of dialogue is essential to coexistence, and vice versa. We commend the tireless efforts undertaken by the various stakeholders, especially those of UNESCO and the Alliance of Civilizations.

Morocco is pleased to have hosted the second iteration of the International Conference on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue, held from 10 to 12 September in Fez, on the theme of otherness. It provided an opportunity to take stock of actions undertaken to implement the call made in Fez underlining the urgent need there is for bringing about new ways to ensure interaction and understanding among civilizations. During the Conference, King Mohammed VI called for the implementation of a new global order for peace structured around the principles of coexistence, acceptance, plurality and difference. In the wake of the historic adoption in Marrakech of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, we think it important to stress the connection between the values of peace, tolerance and coexistence and the issue of migration. On that issue, the Kingdom of Morocco takes a proactive and humanistic approach based on full respect for the rights of migrants.

Before concluding, we want to reiterate that the international community should redouble its efforts and continue to work for the preservation of peace and prosperity and to ensure good-neighbourly relations.

Finally, on 13 September 2019 we will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, and we hope that occasion will enable us to have a frank discussion, present our tangible commitments and reflect constructively together on how we can work to advance peace, dialogue and mutual respect.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/73/L.43, A/73/L.48, A/73/L.52 and A/73/L.55. Before giving the floor for explanations of vote before the voting, I would like to remind speakers that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Bagwell (United States of America): As a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-faith nation, the United States recognizes the importance of dialogue, understanding and cooperation among individuals of different religious and cultural backgrounds. The United States strongly believes in the value of programmes, including those of the United Nations system, that encourage a culture of peace and promote justice, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We welcome initiatives, including the upcoming high-level forum, that concretely address the root causes of conflict by promoting efforts to counter terrorism, reject violence and highlight the positive contribution of young people. We also welcome the updating of the draft resolutions to reflect the importance for a culture of peace of preventing violent extremism. The Secretary-General's plan of action to prevent violent extremism lays out key recommendations for concerted preventive action by the international community in order to address the underlying conditions that drive individuals to radicalize to violence. Young people play an important role in efforts to prevent violent extremism, as well as in the promotion of peace and security, and we welcome efforts to enhance their involvement in preventing violent extremism and promoting a culture of peace.

However, with regard to an international day of multilateralism and diplomacy for peace, we have stated on many occasions that we worry that a proliferation of international days tends to dilute whatever value there is in highlighting or commemorating legitimate international developments or urgent issues of international concern. We do not see that such an international day will have any tangible impact on the furtherance of multilateral objectives or the cause of peace and security. Certainly it is an irony not lost on us that draft resolution A/73/L.48 is being proposed by Venezuela, which is led by a brutal regime that flagrantly flouts its international human rights obligations and commitments. For those reasons, we are calling for a vote, and we will vote against the draft resolution entitled "International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace".

The United States has always been a strong supporter of effective multilateral institutions. However, many multilateral organizations and agreements are failing the very Member States that they were created to serve effectively, and multilateralism should not be viewed as an end unto itself.

As United States Secretary of State Pompeo recently underscored in Brussels, we are supporting institutions that we believe can be improved and that work in American interests and in those of all Member States, in the service of our shared values. We will continue to work with our friends and allies towards realizing the promise of effective multilateral institutions that serve our citizens and our values. To quote George Marshall's address to the General Assembly in Paris in 1948:

"International organizations cannot take the place of national and personal effort, or of local and individual imagination. International action cannot replace self-help".

Mr. Grigoryan (Armenia): I would like to present the position of the delegation of Armenia on draft resolution A/73/L.55, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace". At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the co-facilitators for their efforts in bringing the draft resolution to a successful outcome, as well as for their constructive approach in accommodating some of Armenia's proposals during the negotiations.

As a staunch advocate of the continuing promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, we agree with the purposes of the draft resolution. Our objection to the draft resolution's twenty-fifth preambular paragraph, which refers to an event named the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue as a key global platform for promoting intercultural dialogue, is based on the fact that a particular Member State has developed a tradition of abusing various international forums, especially those organized in its country, thereby distorting the principles of international law and the basic elements of peaceful conflict resolution while disseminating hate speech at the State level.

In that regard, we regret that the event referred to in the draft resolution, which was aimed at promoting multilateralism and intercultural dialogue, was misused by the country that hosted it to manipulate an international gathering and turn it into an instrument of propaganda. We firmly believe that in organizing international events on multilateralism, intercultural dialogue and the promotion of peace, due regard should also be given to the record of the host country in terms of adherence to human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as to the protection of cultural heritage of historical and religious significance.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position before the adoption of the draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/73/L.43, entitled “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace”.

I 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 draft resolution A/73/L.43, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, the Gambia, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, the Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.43?

Draft resolution A/73/L.43 was adopted (resolution 73/126).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.48, entitled “International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace”.

I 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 draft resolution A/73/L.48, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors: Canada, China, El Salvador, Norway, Palau and the Russian Federation.

The Acting President: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkey, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic

of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Draft resolution A/73/L.48 was adopted by 144 votes to 2 (resolution 73/127).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Nicaragua informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.52, entitled “Enlightenment and religious tolerance”.

I 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 document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/73/L.52: Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, Iraq, Japan, Lebanon, Libya, the Marshall Islands, Morocco, Myanmar, the Niger, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda and the United Arab Emirates.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.52?

Draft resolution A/73/L.52 was adopted (resolution 73/128).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.55, entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”.

I 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 document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/73/L.55: Austria, Bangladesh,

Benin, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Ecuador, Eritrea, Guinea, Guatemala, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Morocco, Myanmar, the Niger, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Samoa, Singapore, Slovenia, the Sudan, Suriname, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkey, Uzbekistan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.55?

Draft resolution A/73/L.55 was adopted (resolution 73/129).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to those wishing to speak in explanation of vote or position on the resolutions just adopted, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Charwath (Austria): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

I would first like to explain our vote on resolution 73/127, on the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace. At a time when the rules-based international order is being increasingly challenged, we attach great importance to reiterating our collective support for multilateralism, building on the strong call to promote the multilateral system made by our leaders at the general debate in September.

Europe’s commitment to multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core, is based on our values and beliefs, but it is also an act of realism. Today’s complex threats require complex, articulated responses. Only together can we have a real impact in ensuring sustainable development, peace and security and the universal promotion and protection of human rights. Only together can we achieve education for all, gender equality and our commitment to leaving no one behind.

The European Union is a staunch supporter of dialogue and cooperation. That is why we will continue to defend multilateral diplomacy and its achievements, from the Iran nuclear deal to the Paris Agreement on

Climate Change, and to support the essential work of all United Nations programmes and agencies. We welcome the efforts of the facilitators to try to accommodate the EU's concerns during negotiations on the draft resolution, during which the EU expressed its view that as a general principle it is not in favour of the multiplication of international days. The most effective way to promote multilateralism lies in our commitments and actions.

In addition, we continue to believe that the singling out of one international grouping in a resolution goes against the principle of multilateralism. We note that the political declaration of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as referred to in the resolution, also contains elements that are not conducive to multilateralism. However, in the spirit of dialogue and cooperation to which we just referred, and taking into account the overarching theme of the resolution, we decided to vote in favour of it. We remain ready to engage constructively with all partners in pursuing a consensus approach in support of multilateralism.

I would now like to turn to resolution 73/128, on enlightenment and religious tolerance. The European Union was founded on the values of non-discrimination, tolerance and respect for human rights, including freedom of expression and freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief. Furthermore, promoting and protecting freedom of religion or belief as a universal human right, and eliminating discrimination on the basis of religion or belief, are key priorities of the European Union's human rights policy. For those reasons, the EU has for a number of years been the main sponsor of the annual resolution on freedom of religion or belief.

The EU has always acknowledged the great value and crucial role of education in promoting mutual understanding, tolerance, non-discrimination and respect in all matters relating to freedom of religion or belief, which is highlighted both in this year's draft resolution on freedom of religion or belief (A/73/589/Add.2) and in our guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief.

In that regard, we welcome the focus of resolution 73/128 on education as a tool for promoting religious tolerance, and we continue to support efforts by States to encourage a wider knowledge in society at large of the diversity of religions and beliefs and of the history, traditions, languages and cultures of the various

religious minorities existing within their jurisdiction. We also appreciated the open and collaborative negotiation process on the draft text, which we believe is positively reflected in resolution 73/128, and we would like to thank the delegation of Uzbekistan for its open and constructive approach. However, the EU does not support the proliferation of resolutions as a general principle and was not therefore in a position to sponsor the resolution, whose theme is already covered at length in existing resolutions. Nevertheless, we remain strongly committed to promoting efforts to combat religious intolerance, and for that reason the States members of the European Union joined the consensus on resolution 73/128.

Mr. Bagwell (United States of America): With regard to the adoption of resolution 73/129, on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, and resolution 73/128, on enlightenment and religious tolerance, the United States firmly supports efforts to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation. However, while we joined the consensus on those resolutions, we would like to take this opportunity to clarify some important points.

The United States strongly supports freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief. We oppose any attempts to unduly limit the exercise of those fundamental freedoms, and therefore dissociate ourselves from the new text negotiated in this year's resolutions that suggests that the protections for freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief are at odds with each other. We strongly believe that protecting freedom of religion and freedom of expression promotes mutual respect and pluralism and is essential to human dignity and a robust civil society. We firmly believe that all people should be free to choose and practice their faith, based on the persuasion of the mind and heart. Freedom of religion plays an important societal role and is crucial to the creation of tolerant and respectful societies in which negative stereotypes carry little meaning. Rather than seeking restrictions on self-expression in order to deal with intolerance, the United States advocates robust protections for speech, as well as the enforcement of appropriate legal regimes dealing with discriminatory acts and hate crimes.

The United States strongly believes in working together to build a more secure and peaceful world through the promotion of justice, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms. With regard to calls

for moderation, we are concerned about the possibility that the implementation of moderation-focused programmes and policies could be subject to abuse. We are particularly concerned that such programmes and policies could undermine people's enjoyment of freedom of expression and thought, conscience and religion or belief.

With regard to the references in resolution 73/128 to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we have addressed our concerns regarding such references in a general explanation of position delivered in the Second Committee on 8 November and in an explanation of position in the General Assembly (see A/73/PV.44) regarding resolution 73/24, entitled "Sport as an enabler of sustainable development", which was adopted on 3 December under agenda item 12.

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): I would like to present our position on resolution 73/127, entitled "International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace". Armenia would like to reiterate its support and commitment to multilateralism as an effective instrument for addressing the complex issues relating to the challenges that the world is facing today. We recognize the importance of multilateralism and diplomacy in advancing sustainable development, peace and security and human rights. Restoring our humanity, sustaining peace and respecting human dignity are important priorities that can be achieved only through concerted efforts and a coordinated response. We should all collectively do more to help mitigate situations involving crises in which basic human rights, including the right to life, are increasingly challenged, and that require a stronger emphasis on the capacity of multilateral institutions to deliver an adequate response.

The date of 24 April, designated by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to mark the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, has crucial significance for Armenia and the Armenian people, as it holds important meaning and touches on special sensitivities for all Armenians. It is the day when the Armenian people and their friends around the world pay tribute to the memory of the victims of the Armenian genocide. The Armenian genocide is a stark case in point in the argument for promoting and fostering prevention and upholding collective faith in the fundamental human rights and the dignity and the worth of the human person. It is a reminder that impunity fosters the recurrence of crime. It also illustrates what happened 100 years ago in the

absence of effective multilateral institutions, when the international community failed to provide any adequate response or international protection.

Today, as a State, Armenia has a duty to work within multilateral cooperative frameworks to prevent future atrocities. Armenia is resolved to continue to contribute to multilateral efforts to advance prevention, including the prevention of identity-based discrimination, mass atrocities and the crime of genocide, as an important function of the United Nations. The adoption in 2015 of resolution 69/323, designating 9 December as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime, was a powerful manifestation of responsible multilateralism. And this year marks the seventieth anniversary of Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is yet another milestone in our reaffirmation of our collective determination to fight impunity and prevent any recurrence of human suffering.

We hope that the designation of the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace will become an important contribution to enhancing global cooperation for peace, development and human rights at the national and global levels.

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

The representative of Azerbaijan has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first statement and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): There is nothing surprising in the inadequate and irrelevant comments made by the delegation of Armenia at today's plenary meeting. The fact is that the objectives of a culture of peace are alien to Armenia. Otherwise, it would not have become a uniquely mono-ethnic State as a result of its consistent policies of exclusion, discrimination and incompatibility on ethnic and religious grounds.

In obstructing efforts aimed at the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue and challenging the various global initiatives to that end, solely because of its relations with Azerbaijan,

Armenia has demonstrated that the prospects of its good-faith engagement in ongoing efforts to resolve our conflict as soon as possible are elusive. The Armenian representative's comments on human rights and so-called hate propaganda are beneath criticism. The relevant United Nations bodies and other international organizations have more than once expressed serious concern about the spirit of intolerance prevailing in Armenia. I am confident that the international community would be more interested in hearing from the delegation of Armenia about the real problems that the country and its people are facing in the political, economic, social and humanitarian spheres than its comments on human rights and democracy elsewhere.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 15.

Agenda item 116 (continued)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(a) Election of members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Note by the Secretary-General (A/73/608)

The Acting President: Pursuant to General Assembly decision 42/450, of 17 December 1987, and upon their nomination by the Economic and Social Council, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

The Assembly has before it document A/73/608, which contains the nominations by the Economic and Social Council to fill the vacancies in the Committee that will occur as a result of the expiration, on 31 December 2018, of the terms of office of Argentina, France, Peru, the Russian Federation, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

Those States are eligible for immediate re-election. I should like to remind members that after 1 January 2019, the following States will remain members of the Committee: Bangladesh, Belarus, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Cuba, Egypt, Eritrea, Germany, Haiti, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Pakistan, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Senegal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Those 26 States will therefore not be eligible in this election.

I should now like to inform members that the following States have been nominated by the Economic and Social Council: Angola and Ethiopia for the two seats for the African States; the Russian Federation for the one seat for the Eastern European States; Argentina for one of the two seats for the Latin American and Caribbean States; and France for one of the two seats for the Western European and other States.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot. However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

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

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The number of States nominated from among the African States, the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States is equal to or lower than the number of seats to be filled in each of those groups.

May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare those States nominated by the Economic and Social Council — Angola, Argentina, Ethiopia, France and the Russian Federation — elected as members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2019?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I congratulate the States that have just been elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Members are reminded that two vacancies remain for a term beginning on the date of election by the General Assembly: one member from the Western European and other States for a term expiring on 31 December 2018, and one member from the Latin American and Caribbean States for a term expiring on 31 December 2020.

Members are also reminded that the Economic and Social Council postponed the nominations of one member from the Latin American and Caribbean States and one member from the Western European and other

States for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2019 and expiring on 31 December 2021, respectively. The General Assembly will be in a position to act on those vacancies upon nomination by the Economic and Social Council.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 116.

Agenda item 117 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(e) Appointment of members of the Committee on Conferences

Note by the Secretary-General (A/73/107)

The Acting President: The General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General, contained in document A/73/107. As indicated in that document, as the terms of office of the representatives of Ecuador, Germany, Ghana, Guyana, Hungary, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Liberia will expire on 31 December 2018, it will be necessary for the President of the General Assembly to appoint seven members to fill

the resulting vacancies. Those members will serve for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2019. Consequently, after consultations with the Chairs of the Groups of the African States, the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States, the President of the General Assembly has appointed Ecuador, Germany, Ghana, Guyana, Senegal and Ukraine for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2019.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of these appointments?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I should like to remind members that one seat from the Asia-Pacific States for a period of three years, beginning on 1 January 2019, still remains to be filled. I urge the Group to submit their candidate as soon as possible.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (e) of agenda item 117.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.