



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

**91**<sup>st</sup> plenary meeting  
Thursday, 20 June 2019, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

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

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Gertze (Namibia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

## Agenda item 15 (continued)

### Culture of peace

#### Draft resolution (A/73/L.92)

**The Acting President:** I give the floor to the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.92.

**Mr. Llorentty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Recalling the fraternal ties and age-old traditions shared by our indigenous peoples, we would like to introduce the draft resolution entitled “International Day for the Celebration of the Solstice” (A/73/L.92).

My country, Bolivia, together with Chile, Ecuador and Peru, decided to present this initiative in order to reaffirm, as stated in the draft resolution, that indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs, including the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, traditions and histories.

The draft resolution specifically considers the celebration of the natural phenomenon of the solstice as an expression of the unity of cultural heritage and ancient traditions that contributes significantly to strengthening ties between peoples on the basis of mutual respect and

the ideals of peace and good-neighbourliness. We must now be much more aware that solstices and equinoxes are events of particular importance to indigenous peoples, for whom they symbolize land fertility, agricultural and food production systems, cultural heritage and their traditions.

By asking the General Assembly to recognize 21 June as the International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice, in its various manifestations, we seek to recognize this celebration as an expression of the unity of cultural heritage and ancient traditions, since many indigenous peoples have demonstrated throughout history that the symbiosis between human beings and nature promotes a mutually beneficial relationship. For that reason, we highlight the draft’s invitation to the States Members of the United Nations to participate in the events organized by the States themselves, or by indigenous peoples or communities where the solstice is celebrated, in order to raise awareness of this celebration.

Tomorrow, 21 June, starting very early, millions of people, regardless of borders or nationalities, indigenous or not, will celebrate the beginning of the new Andean-Amazonian year. In the case of our region, the Andean-Amazonian cultures, from thousands of years ago to the present day, have celebrated the winter solstice on this date, which in Bolivia is called Willkakuti in the Andes and Yasitata Guazu in the lowlands.

In that regard, by submitting this draft resolution to the plenary of the General Assembly, Bolivia, under the leadership of President Morales, seeks to disseminate

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the importance of a culture of living in harmony with nature, which is inherent to all civilizations of the modern world. We will therefore continue to fight for the recognition of the interculturalism and traditions of our peoples.

Finally, in addition to highlighting the active participation of the four Andean countries throughout the negotiation process of this text, as well as that of delegations from other regions of the world that also celebrate this important event, we request the support of the entire membership of the United Nations for the adoption of the draft resolution.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.92, entitled “International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Ms. De Miranda** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/73/L.92: Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, the Philippines, Suriname, Turkmenistan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.92?

*Draft resolution A/73/L.92 was adopted (resolution 73/300).*

**The Acting President:** I now call on those delegations that wish to make statements of position on the resolution just adopted.

**Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the Assembly’s adoption today of resolution 73/300, establishing 21 June as the International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice. My country had the honour of promoting and facilitating the negotiations on the text. With the adoption of the resolution, we mark a new international milestone in the recognition of the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples, and specifically their right to participate in and revitalize their traditions and customs.

Ecuador is a multicultural and plurinational country that recognizes and guarantees the collective

rights of indigenous peoples at the constitutional level. The indigenous peoples and nationalities of Ecuador have a right to build and preserve their own cultural identity, access their cultural heritage and express their culture. Ecuador’s Constitution also grants the right to freely maintain, develop and build one’s identity, sense of belonging, ancestral traditions and forms of social organization, as well as the right to maintain, recover, safeguard, develop and preserve one’s cultural and historical heritage as an indivisible part of the heritage of Ecuador.

My country is home to a wealth of traditional celebrations, many of which have already been declared to be intangible heritage by the Ministry of Culture, and appear as such in our National Institute of Cultural Heritage. The celebration of Inti Raymi is one of them.

The Government of Ecuador is committed to recognizing and celebrating diversity, as well as respecting the right of indigenous peoples and nationalities to preserve their own ways of life. As such, it has taken important measures to safeguard collective rights, forms of social organization, the exercise of legal systems, the protection and promotion of wisdom and the practice of rituals.

Ecuador ushers in its summer solstice with the harvest of the first dry grains. For our indigenous communities, this is a sacred time that is dedicated to finding new seeds that will ensure their continuity and survival as peoples. It is the time when the Andean people celebrate Inti Raymi, the Sun Festival. Inti Raymi is an ancient astronomical and spiritual celebration for expressing gratitude to the Sun Father for the harvest. For some peoples, Inti Raymi marks the start of a new cycle, a new beginning. Many indigenous peoples and communities of Ecuador even begin their celebration before 21 June through a cultural and spiritual expression imbued with ancestral signs, symbols, colours, music and dance. What is more, Inti Raymi incorporates a series of events that speak of the existence of a form of diplomacy among peoples. It contains a protocol based on the age-old tradition of the original communities, which, in addition to affirming their communal energy and belonging, is a space conducive to celebrating diversity. As such, this type of experience could help build diplomacy with a community spirit that recognizes and welcomes cultural diversity.

We present this initiative along with Bolivia, Peru and Chile in recognition of the ancient traditions of the indigenous peoples and of the fact that for them, solstices and equinoxes symbolize the fertility of the Earth, systems of agricultural and food production and cultural heritage, and help strengthen links among peoples. International recognition of the celebration of Inti Raymi is a fundamental step that will help build peoples' identities and meet their challenges of coexisting and cohabiting anywhere in the world while expressing their cultural manifestations.

I would like to thank all the countries that joined this effort, collaborated on drafting this document and sponsored the text. We trust that the declaration of this International Day will enable us to strengthen spaces for exchange and interaction between the international community and indigenous peoples, in particular, and society, in general, and that through these actions we can broaden intercultural dialogue and enhance cooperation and solidarity among indigenous States and peoples.

**Mr. Skoknic Tapia** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to express its appreciation for the support of the membership for resolution 73/300, on the International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice, which we have just adopted. This celebration, in its various forms and manifestations, is a tradition of the Andean countries, including my own. The General Assembly's adoption of this resolution strengthens the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which stresses our right to practice and revitalize our culture, traditions and customs.

Chile believes that the celebration of the winter solstice, which takes place tomorrow, is an important date for indigenous peoples. Tomorrow is the shortest day of the year in the southern hemisphere. Not only does it mark the official start of winter, it also represents the beginning of the process of the Sun's coming closer to the Earth.

Chile has a strong connection with observing the universe. As we are in an excellent position for astronomical observation, my country has become a global reference point for scientific activity in the field.

A few days after the solstice, Chile will witness a total eclipse of the Sun that will be visible from the northern part of my country and that will also mark the beginning of eclipse season.

Lastly, in addition to reiterating our appreciation for the support of the United Nations for this initiative, we would urge all interested members and specialized agencies, in particular UNESCO, to participate in events organized by Member States, indigenous peoples and communities in which the solstice is celebrated.

**Mr. Ugarelli** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru welcomes the adoption of resolution 73/300, which recognizes 21 June as the International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice in its different manifestations. For many of our indigenous peoples, this date is of particular relevance since it marks the beginning of the Andean New Year, whose celebrations were declared by Peru's Ministry of Culture in 2013 to be of national cultural interest. These celebrations are associated with festivities that our peoples, which belong to millenary civilizations, have nurtured and maintained for centuries as an expression of our cultural legacy to humankind.

One of these festivities is Inti Raymi, which is celebrated by the Inca around this time of year and marks the beginning of a new seasonal cycle, the basis of their production and economic system. Hence the importance of this time of the year for our indigenous peoples. The festivities, celebrated to this very day, are one of the most important events in the city of Cuzco, the ancient Inca capital, which attracts thousands of tourists every year. The Declaration is a recognition by this forum of the ancestral knowledge of our indigenous peoples, which is a positive factor for their development.

Finally, we wish to express our appreciation to the delegation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for its initiative, along with the delegations of Chile, Ecuador and Peru, and to all States that sponsored the resolution.

**Mr. Castañeda Solares** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the delegations of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile and Peru for submitting resolution 73/300, which officially recognizes 21 June as the International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice, which we believe will contribute to greater recognition of the cultural diversity and richness of our peoples.

Guatemala, as the heart of the Mayan world, shares in this celebration and is deeply proud of the contributions that Mayan civilization has made in the areas of science, astronomy, mathematics, architecture, medicine and the understanding of the cyclical nature of time, directly influenced by the relationship between

the movements of the stars, the Sun and the Moon. On that basis, the Maya civilization developed precise calendars that recognize the two solstices and equinoxes as part of a perfect cycle that affects forestry- and agriculture-related activities and the celebrations of our indigenous peoples. The Mayan vision of the cosmos also has a cyclical concept of life, based on balance, that acknowledges the mutually beneficial relationship between human beings, nature and spirituality.

As recognized in many of the international instruments adopted by the General Assembly, indigenous cultures possess incalculable, priceless knowledge, which they have shared throughout history for the benefit of life itself and humankind. We are aware of the significant challenges involved for States in the process of protecting this knowledge, and of the importance of stepping up our efforts as an international community to ensure the transmission and protection of ancestral knowledge.

That historical knowledge must be transmitted to children and young people so that they can understand their cultural heritage and feel proud of their identity. The promotion of culture and identity and of respect for natural cycles is also very important for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for action on climate and for the promotion of a culture of peace at the international, national and local levels. That is why it is important to support the promotion and protection of such celebrations as well as the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage.

We are convinced that we can continue working together to celebrate and revitalize cultural diversity at all levels, because it promotes unity and mutual respect among our civilizations and countries as well as among all of us.

In conclusion, I would like to convey the support of Guatemala for continuing to work towards our objective of leaving no one behind and celebrating cultural diversity at all levels. Guatemala, as a natural and cultural destination, waits with open arms throughout these celebrations.

As it says in the Popol Vuh, the sacred book of the Maya, dawn broke for those peoples who on more than one occasion throughout history had to endure periods of darkness. May dawn illuminate us, and may we continue working together to build a history of peace for present and future generations.

**Mr. Lawrence** (United States of America): The United States joined the consensus on resolution 73/300 today on the express understanding that the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are not legally binding on Member States, and to the extent that it is implied in this decision and in these declarations, the United States does not recognize the creation of any new right that we have not previously recognized, the expansion of the content or coverage of existing rights, or any other change in the current state of treaty or customary international law.

We also understand the resolution's reaffirmation of prior documents to apply to those who affirmed them initially. With respect to operative paragraph 3, we understand that the cost of all activities that may arise from the implementation of this resolution that are not met by existing resources should be met from voluntary contributions.

With respect to the second preambular paragraph, the United States was an observer State when the UNESCO General Conference adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. Because the United States therefore did not vote in favour of the Declaration's adoption, the United States declines to affirm the Declaration and dissociates itself from the second preambular paragraph.

Lastly, the United States would like to put on record its concern about the proliferation of International Years.

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

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 15.

#### **Agenda item 7 (continued)**

#### **Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items**

**The Acting President:** I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft resolution A/73/L.93, circulated under agenda item 70, entitled "Promotion and protection of the rights of children".

Members will recall that at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2018, the General Assembly decided to allocate this item to the Third Committee. To enable the Assembly to proceed expeditiously on the item in this meeting, may I take it that the Assembly wishes

to consider agenda item 70 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

*It was so decided.*

#### **Agenda item 70 (continued)**

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly will now take action on the draft resolution entitled “Commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child”, issued as document A/73/L.93.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.93?

*Draft resolution A/73/L.93 was adopted (resolution 73/301).*

**The Acting President:** On behalf of the President of the General Assembly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Georgi Velikov Panayotov of Bulgaria and Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi of Pakistan, the co-facilitators of the informal consultations on the modalities for the high-level plenary meeting on the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, who demonstrated great ability and patience in their conduct of the discussions and complex negotiations on the text. I also thank Member States for their valuable contributions to reaching an agreement on the draft resolution.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 70.

#### **Agenda item 132**

#### **Sexual exploitation and abuse: implementing a zero-tolerance policy**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General (A/73/744)**

##### **Draft resolution (A/73/L.90)**

**The Acting President:** I give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.90.

**Mr. Edrees (Egypt) (spoke in Arabic):** At the outset, allow me to express my pleasure at participating in this meeting of the General Assembly under the presidency of Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés in order to debate an item of high priority and importance

to all States Members of the United Nations, that is, “Sexual exploitation and abuse: implementing a zero-tolerance policy”.

My country is keen to introduce procedural draft resolution A/73/L.90 at our meeting today, owing to our continuing commitment to supporting United Nations efforts to implement a zero-tolerance policy with regard to crimes of sexual exploitation and abuse, and to complete the role played by Egypt in placing this item on the agenda of the General Assembly, in accordance with resolution 71/278, entitled “United Nations action on sexual exploitation and abuse.” That resolution, adopted by consensus based on an Egyptian initiative, addressed the issue from a comprehensive perspective with a view to combating that scourge within the United Nations system at large, including its agencies, funds, programmes, peacekeeping missions and special political missions, and non-United Nations forces that have a Security Council mandate. The resolution gave the victims of such crimes high priority by calling for strengthening the Organization’s reporting procedures and remedial measures in order to increase accountability and ensure justice for victims.

I hope that members will agree with me on the importance of maintaining this momentum and continuing efforts to achieve this lofty goal. That is why today’s draft resolution is important for us to renew our commitment to making every effort to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse, continuing the dialogue to assess the progress made in this regard and consulting on how to promote such efforts.

Egypt held two rounds of informal consultations on the draft resolution in order to involve all Member States in drafting and enriching it. Indeed, many proposals have been responded to based on the constructive approach taken by Egypt and Member States in this regard.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the 25 Member States sponsoring the draft resolution: Bangladesh, Benin, the Central African Republic, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Indonesia, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Argentina, Djibouti, Ecuador, Jordan, Lebanon, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Thailand and Uruguay. The number of States and the variety of regions to which they belong represent the best possible testimony to the

strong political support given to the issue of combating sexual exploitation and abuse from a comprehensive perspective, whether at Headquarters or in the field.

I would like to welcome the report of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (A/73/744), issued on 14 February. The report includes important information on the Secretariat's efforts to implement the zero-tolerance policy within the United Nations as a whole. The report makes clear that although the number of sexual exploitation and abuse cases in peacekeeping operations and special political missions decreased in 2018 compared with 2017, it has significantly increased within United Nations bodies, agencies and programmes. The United Nations also found also cases of sexual abuse among non-United Nations forces. Those are indicators that we must be fully aware of so as to avoid any unilateral attempts to stigmatize troop-contributing countries based on individual cases or to call for unfair collective punishment of participating units. The enormous sacrifices made by the personnel of troop- and police-contributing countries in peacekeeping operations should not be forgotten, as they work in extremely difficult environments. That requires a great deal of attention and continued work in order to ensure that all the necessary measures are taken to combat and prevent such crimes within the international system as a whole, while continuing to provide victims with the support they need.

In his report, the Secretary-General also encourages Member States to provide information on their national initiatives against sexual exploitation and abuse, and refers to the message he addressed to the States members of the 2018 Circle of Leadership on the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations Operations in that regard, and to the seven States, including Egypt, that responded to that message through their national measures and initiatives.

Based on its responsibility as a major contributor of troops and police to United Nations peacekeeping operations, and on its commitment to a zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, Egypt has joined the Secretary-General's initiative on the Circle of Leadership. Egypt has also joined the voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse. We have also taken a number of important preventive and curative national measures in this area, including courses on combating and

preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in our basic training programmes for Egyptian troops who are participating in international peacekeeping operations. A national investigations officer is appointed for every Egyptian unit participating in peacekeeping operations to deal with reported cases according to national laws.

Egypt's role does not stop there. We have been working to build African and Arab capabilities through training courses organized by the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding, in addition to developing relevant training materials. According to reports by the Secretary-General, Egypt's efforts are some of the best practices of Member States in preventing and combating crimes of sexual exploitation and abuse.

There is an urgent need for national and international efforts to eradicate the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse, and Egypt will continue to work with all Member States to that end. We stress the importance of providing every kind of assistance to the victims of such crimes, including through a victim support fund for providing legal, psychological and medical support and addressing the psychological and social consequences.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation for the holding of this important meeting and to thank the sponsors of the draft resolution. I call on all other States to join them and to support the important principles and values it is based on. I am confident that they will garner consensus and the support of all Member States.

**Mrs. Azucena** (Philippines): Peacekeeping remains the flagship enterprise of the United Nations. It is therefore imperative that issues that undermine that agenda, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, receive renewed attention.

We commend the efforts of the Secretary-General and his team to improve the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse so as to curb this scourge and rebuild the trust of the communities affected. The purpose of peacekeeping is to prevent the humiliating abuses that go with conflict. When peacekeeping itself promotes such abuses, the endeavour defeats its own purpose.

This issue not only undermines the values and principles of the United Nations, it erodes the trust of the peoples we have vowed to protect. When those committed to bringing peace and safety inflict the

worst features of war, they commit the worst possible betrayal of United Nations missions. It is inexcusable and unacceptable, and it is a disgrace. It has no place in the United Nations system.

Viewed in the context of the protection-of-civilians mandate of United Nations peacekeeping operations, this critical issue must be addressed aggressively through various methods, including robust predeployment and in-mission training programmes that underscore leadership responsibility and accountability throughout the chain of command; appropriate information exchange on context-specific responses to sexual exploitation and abuse cases; and innovative capacity-building initiatives based on best practices for overcoming cultures of impunity.

The Philippines is proud of its more than 50-year peacekeeping tradition in 19 countries and territories, and reiterates its strong and unequivocal support for the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations and missions. One case of sexual exploitation and abuse is one too many. It tarnishes the Organization's image and does a great disservice to our brave and honourable peacekeepers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of peace.

The Philippines is strongly committed to ending sexual violence whenever and wherever it occurs, and we hold our troops accountable to the highest standards of conduct. We assure the United Nations that our personnel will be following very strict standards of conduct and behaviour in the performance of their peacekeeping duties. We have also adopted more stringent criteria for selecting peacekeeping candidates. The Philippines stands with the States Members of the United Nations in protecting the good name of United Nations peacekeeping and upholding the trust of our people.

**Mr. Verdier** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the President of the General Assembly, as well as Egypt and Ethiopia, which promoted the holding of this debate, for giving us the opportunity to speak about a challenge whose solution is vital to the future of peacekeeping missions as well as to the image of the Organization as a whole.

Argentina affirms its continued strong support for the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and its implementation in all peacekeeping operations by its military, police and

civilian participants. The cases of sexual exploitation and abuse that continue to take place are appalling, and we therefore believe that we must equip the Organization with effective ways to prevent and punish such acts, which, when committed by personnel against people whose protection has been entrusted to them, represent a flagrant contravention of the mandates of the Organization.

In this regard, we should continue to implement the action plan proposed by the Secretary-General in his recent reports on sexual exploitation and abuse, as reflected in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. Those measures must be harmonized with those of the Security Council, which we also support. The Organization must have a coherent, coordinated and seamless vision on this sensitive issue.

Argentina once again commends the efforts of the Organization in this important task. In that regard, we welcome the appointment of Ms. Jane Holl Lute as Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as the establishment of the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

We want to highlight the fact that at the national level, our country signed the voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse on 29 September 2017. In September 2018, the President of Argentina joined the Secretary-General's Circle of Leadership on the Prevention of and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations Operations. Argentina has two national focal points that specialize in combating sexual abuse and exploitation. The focal point for military personnel serves on the national directorate for human rights in the Ministry of Defence. The most recent appointment is our focal point for police personnel, who serves on the national directorate for international cooperation in security matters within the Ministry of Security.

For Argentina, this topic is of critical importance. That is why we sponsored draft resolution A/73/L.90, which is being considered today. The fight against sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions is a fundamental task that is incumbent on us all and that can in no way be left to the mercy of the logic of the various organs or negotiating groups of the Organization. We therefore call for increased cooperation and mutual understanding among the Secretariat, the Security Council, the General Assembly and especially the

troop- and police-contributing countries, with a view to devising and supporting the measures necessary to ensure its success.

**Mr. Bermúdez Álvarez** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to mention that Uruguay welcomes the holding of this plenary debate under agenda item 132, “Sexual exploitation and abuse: implementing a zero-tolerance policy”, which offers the membership an opportunity to discuss a topic of great importance to the Organization.

As a State Member of the Organization and as a troop- and police-contributing country with a long history of participation in various peacekeeping operations, Uruguay attaches the utmost importance to combating cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. In that regard, my country reiterates its unwavering commitment to the Organization’s zero-tolerance policy.

Without going into detail, I would like to mention some of the actions that Uruguay is taking, both domestically and within the framework of the United Nations, to advance the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse. At the national level, every member of national contingents must pass a predeployment course taught by professionals from outside the armed forces, with the participation of the United Nations country office. That course includes topics such as human rights, international humanitarian law, specific policies to combat sexual exploitation and abuse, gender and child protection. Each member must sign an affidavit prior to deployment acknowledging that he or she has received instruction in those subjects, assumes full responsibility for compliance, and authorizes any disciplinary repatriation and associated costs to be deducted from his or her salary.

Uruguay has established a focal point in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, to which victims or their legal representatives of cases of sexual exploitation or abuse committed by Uruguayan troops can reach out for advice on the procedures to be followed in order to exercise their rights under Uruguay’s legal system. Our Ministry of National Defence has established a protocol that provides guarantees for the procedures to be followed from the time a case of sexual exploitation and abuse comes to light to when it is resolved, including the corresponding measures to be taken against perpetrators and the support offered to the victims.

At the level of the United Nations, Uruguay is a member of the Secretary-General’s leadership circle,

represented by the President of Uruguay, and participates actively in its work. My country has signed the voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and has also strongly supported the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and signed the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, which highlights the commitment to supporting the Organization’s zero-tolerance policy. Finally, our delegation maintains an excellent cooperative and collaborative relationship with the Conduct and Discipline Unit of the Secretariat, working to resolve pending cases.

There is no doubt that the United Nations and its States Members have made significant progress in combating this scourge, but much remains to be done to continue strengthening the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse, with a focus on prevention and assistance to victims. Uruguay will continue to support all efforts in that regard, as well as the consideration of this issue in all the relevant organs of the Organization.

For all those reasons, we have agreed to sponsor draft resolution A/73/L.90, introduced a few minutes ago, and we trust that it will receive the broadest possible support of member States.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.90, entitled “United Nations action on sexual exploitation and abuse”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Ms. De Miranda** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/73/L.90: Argentina, Bhutan, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guinea, Jordan, Lebanon, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, South Africa, Thailand and Uruguay.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.90?

*Draft resolution A/73/L.90 was adopted (resolution 73/302).*



**The Acting President:** Before giving the floor to delegations for explanations of position on the resolution 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. Conroy** (United States of America): The United States welcomes this opportunity to affirm its commitment to effectively addressing the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse and its collective support for the United Nations zero-tolerance policy and the Secretary-General's related efforts to strengthen its implementation.

Sexual exploitation and abuse inflict significant harm on marginalized populations already vulnerable to violence, the very communities that look to the United Nations for protection and assistance in some of the world's most dangerous places. When those responsible are not held accountable for their deplorable actions, the commission of sexual exploitation and abuse also undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of the

United Nations, particularly in its field operations, agencies, funds and programmes.

The United States welcomes future engagement with Member States on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and strongly supports the authority of Secretary-General Guterres to implement the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. Today we reaffirm that we must all continue to do our utmost to address this scourge wherever it may exist within the United Nations system and to promote accountability for the perpetrators of such unacceptable acts.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position after the adoption.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 132?

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 11 a.m.*