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Chair: Mr. Braun (Luxembourg)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 70: Promotion and protection of human rights (continued)

- (a) Implementation of human rights instruments (continued)** ([A/74/40](#), [A/74/44](#), [A/74/48](#), [A/74/55](#), [A/74/56](#), [A/74/146](#), [A/74/148](#), [A/74/228](#), [A/74/233](#), [A/74/254](#) and [A/74/256](#))
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- (c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (continued)** ([A/74/166](#), [A/74/188](#), [A/74/196](#), [A/74/268](#), [A/74/273](#), [A/74/275](#), [A/74/276](#), [A/74/278](#), [A/74/303](#), [A/74/311](#), [A/74/342](#) and [A/74/507](#))
- (d) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (continued)** ([A/74/36](#))

1. **Mr. Heller** (Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation), introducing his report ([A/74/197](#)), said that megaprojects had a long-lasting impact on various aspects of society, including human lives, the economy and the environment. Although such projects could contribute towards the enhancement of people's livelihoods, they could also impede the enjoyment of the human rights to water and sanitation. The extensive usage of land required for the implementation and massive exploitation of water sources could have dire consequences for the availability and quality of water and, in general, for the way the population accessed water and sanitation services.

2. There was an imbalance of power between those adversely affected by megaprojects and the proponents thereof, who framed them as solutions for development. The affected population was often reluctant to accept such projects, since for them the negative impacts exceeded the benefits provided. That polarized view of

megaprojects sometimes further aggravated social conflicts, and their implementation had been associated with attacks against human rights defenders. It was essential to regulate such projects with an emphasis on addressing power imbalances and prevention and mitigation of their adverse effects on human rights. The potential negative impacts included reduction in water availability and in accessibility to water services and lower water quality, which in turn could affect other aspects of the human rights to water and sanitation, such as affordability, acceptability, privacy and dignity, in addition to the rights to health, housing and education.

3. His report introduced a megaproject cycle framework for the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation, consisting of seven stages, each entailing impacts, challenges and enabling factors to realize the human rights to water and sanitation. The report also included a list of questions that constituted guidelines for accountable actors to implement their human rights obligations and responsibilities.

4. The inclusion of megaprojects in national policies and strategies was often taken for granted as the natural way for development to take place. However, that approach ignored different ways of conceptualizing development. States must consider the advantageous and adverse effects of megaprojects on human rights, and decide whether the chosen megaproject was the most suitable option for scaling up economic growth and the least intrusive measure that would not undermine human rights. Where several policy options were available, States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should select the option that least restricted rights under the Covenant.

5. States needed to put an emphasis on preventive measures to avoid or mitigate the consequences for human rights, in particular, the rights to water and sanitation. Contingency plans for disasters caused by the collapse of such projects should be addressed at the planning stage. Accountable actors and civil society should use the list of questions included in the report to address prevention and mitigation of risks arising from megaprojects and to ensure that human rights were complied with at every stage of their lifecycle.

6. **Mr. Roijen** (Observer for the European Union) said that megaprojects had a range of implications for the realization of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation that should be addressed at the planning stage. Development cooperation played an important role in the progressive realization of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. As a major international cooperation donor, the European Union had a firm political commitment to integrating human

rights-based principles into its operational activities for development. He asked how international funders could best integrate a human rights-based approach to their performance and operational standards.

7. **Mr. Bastida Peydro** (Spain), speaking also on behalf of Germany, said that since the launch in 2006 of a joint initiative between Spain and Germany to promote the recognition and progressive realization of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, it had been recognized that those rights were essential for the full enjoyment of the right to life and all other human rights. At the seventy-fourth session, the two countries were seeking to advance the promotion and recognition of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation with a focus on menstrual health and climate change. Given the widespread discrimination and stigma surrounding menstruation and menstrual hygiene, he wondered how the Special Rapporteur was seeking to address those issues in the work of the Committee.

8. **Mr. Kamel** (Algeria) said that the principles of equity and universality of access to water and sanitation had been integrated into his country's policies since the 1990s. Algeria had improved national indicators related to drinking water and sanitation through the construction of dams and wastewater treatment plants and the launch of desalination and purification projects. His Government reiterated its invitation to the Special Rapporteur to carry out an official working visit to Algeria. He asked what action the Special Rapporteur was taking in terms of advocacy to further highlight the importance of universal access to water in the context of mobilizing the international community around the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. **Mr. Monteiro** (Brazil) said that his Government had taken all necessary measures to mitigate the effects of the Brumadinho tailing dam collapse in Brazil on 25 January 2019, including by setting up a crisis office and adopting special measures for farmers and fishermen. The Government also planned to inspect over 3,300 dams and had banned the construction of operations facilities near dams. Administrative measures were also under way to ascertain responsibilities and provide reverse assessment of environmental and socioeconomic impacts.

10. The report mentioned that regulatory gaps were often the reason why normative content of the human rights to water and sanitation were not fully considered by actors in charge of executing megaprojects. He asked how the multilateral system could help to close such gaps so that the cycle framework of such projects could be properly implemented.

11. **Ms. Wang Yi** (China) said that her Government had always attached great importance to ensuring people's access to safe drinking water and sanitation. It had implemented an action plan to prevent water pollution and ensure the provision of safe drinking water for all, including people living in rural areas. The national tap water penetration rate had reached 81 per cent, which meant that the country had achieved the related Sustainable Development Goal ahead of schedule. Her delegation hoped that the Special Rapporteur would further study how to employ scientific and technological means to improve the safety of drinking water in poverty-stricken areas and propose constructive measures and recommendations in accordance with the national conditions of each country.

12. **Ms. Hussain** (Maldives) said that, as highlighted in the report of the Special Rapporteur, some of the negative impacts of megaprojects included reduction in availability or inaccessibility to water services or water sources and negative environmental impacts. In that regard, her Government was authorized to terminate any project that could have an undesirable impact on the environment and to revoke operating licences if there was more than one instance of non-compliance. The country's national strategic action plan included the development and implementation of targeted programmes to build local capacity in water and sewerage systems. Her Government was committed to providing all inhabited islands in the country with safe water and sanitation by 2023 through projects that were environmentally sustainable and planned in consultation with local councils, communities and other stakeholders.

13. **Mr. Heller** (Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation) said that while megaprojects were increasing in number and diversity around the world, the populations affected by them continued to be excluded from consultations. Two of his previous reports had been devoted to international development cooperation with a focus on water and sanitation projects. In those reports, he had identified funders with a very positive approach to the human right to water and sanitation. However, there was often a gap between planning and implementation in that regard. The framework proposed in the current report could be used by States, funders and other stakeholders to ensure that megaprojects did not have an impact on the human rights to water and sanitation.

14. Menstrual hygiene, an issue that had been covered in a previous report on gender equality, was a component of the rights to water and sanitation. However, during field visits and country missions, he had often witnessed how women and girls still lacked

adequate menstrual hygiene facilities and materials in schools and public buildings.

15. Climate change had a strong impact on the availability of water, so a resolution that highlighted that issue could be instrumental for the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation. With regard to the advocacy efforts that he was undertaking to highlight the importance of universal access to water among the international community, he said that he constantly connected the framework of the human rights to water and sanitation with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, he had asked that the World Health Organization/United Nations Children's Fund Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene use a human rights framework in its work. He also presented country situations taking into account the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

16. Lastly, while megaprojects were licensed and approved through environmental laws, it was necessary to incorporate a human rights framework and attain informed consent from the population that would be affected.

17. **Ms. Farha** (Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context), introducing her report (A/74/183), said that she had decided to base her report on the right to housing of indigenous peoples because they were at the forefront of almost all human rights struggles related to housing, including land-grabbing, forced evictions and displacement, climate change and homelessness. Indigenous peoples had been wrested from their homes in every sense: their identities, histories and cultures were denied, their lands stolen, and they were stripped of their resources through nature conservation initiatives, extractive industries and pipeline construction. They were relocated to the least productive lands and, once there, denied basic services, such as potable water and sanitation.

18. In the climate crisis, indigenous peoples disproportionately bore the devastating consequences of climate change, despite having contributed the least to it. An increasing number of indigenous peoples were living in cities, where they often experienced discrimination, inadequate housing and street homelessness. At worst, housing laws, policies and programmes were completely blind to indigenous peoples' histories, exacerbating their experiences of colonization, oppression or marginalization, and at best they provided particularized programming that failed to

meet State obligations under the right to adequate housing.

19. There were a number of steps that States could take immediately to improve the well-being of indigenous peoples, including by recognizing them as such, using "self-identification" as a fundamental criterion. The right to housing was contained in many binding international treaties and was defined as a place to live in peace, security and dignity, a definition that should encompass indigenous understandings of "home". She concurred with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples that the right to housing should be incorporated into national legislation and given full effect, and should include indigenous housing strategies. A fundamental reorientation of the relationship between the State and indigenous peoples was required, in which past wrongs were recognized and a commitment made to redress them. States should recognize the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination. Indigenous peoples should be meaningfully consulted with a view to obtaining their free, prior and informed consent to all decisions made regarding housing policy, laws and programmes that might affect them. States should also declare a moratorium on forced evictions affecting indigenous peoples.

20. The international community was reluctant to address the global housing crisis as an urgent human rights crisis in need of a human rights response. Worldwide, 1.8 billion people were living in homelessness and grossly inadequate housing, and it was estimated that millions of people were being displaced by disasters and consequences of climate change. Yet housing continued to be a commodity for global investors facilitated by States and had become a key driver of inequality. However, there were some signs of improvement. The Government of Canada had passed the National Housing Strategy Act and had implemented the right to housing in domestic legislation, and Portugal had adopted the Basic Housing Act, which emphasized the State's obligation to guarantee housing as a human right. At the local level, cities around the world had committed to "The Shift", a global movement to reclaim and realize the right to housing.

21. As set out in the Sustainable Development Goals, by 2030 States needed to ensure access to adequate, affordable, secure housing for all, upgrade informal settlements and end homelessness. To meet those objectives, States needed to stop treating their housing systems as an extractive industry solely focused on profits, make a fundamental paradigmatic shift and recommit to the project of human rights.

22. **Mr. Roijen** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union attached great importance to enhancing opportunities for dialogue and consultation with indigenous peoples at all levels of cooperation, including in programmes funded by the European Union to secure their full participation and their free, prior and informed consent in a meaningful and systematic way. He asked the Special Rapporteur to share good practices in that regard.

23. The European Union supported the contributions made by United Nations mechanisms to advancing indigenous issues and addressing discrimination and inequalities based on indigenous origin or identity in order to safeguard their economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. The enjoyment of the right to adequate housing for indigenous women was profoundly affected by the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that they suffered because of their gender, indigenous identity and socioeconomic status. It would be interesting to learn how Member States could address the multiple and interrelated root causes of such discrimination in a more comprehensive and effective way and break the vicious cycle of violence and marginalization.

24. **Ms. Calaminus** (Germany) said that her country was concerned about the effects of climate change on housing, a topic that it would bring to the work of the Human Rights Council and the Security Council. The human rights to water and sanitation and to adequate housing were inextricably linked. She asked how the lack of access to safe drinking water affected the standard of adequate housing and enquired about its consequences for populations, in particular indigenous peoples.

25. **Mr. Monteiro** (Brazil) said that his Government sought to combine the preservation of indigenous lands and cultures with the promotion of the socioeconomic well-being of indigenous populations, guaranteeing their constitutional rights, including their right to housing. Infrastructure policies and projects of his Government were presented and discussed with indigenous peoples with a view to safeguarding their rights and respecting their social and cultural diversity. A housing programme had been launched in Brazil that included specific rules for indigenous populations and took into account their social and cultural particularities. Given the indivisibility and interdependence of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the right to housing under international human rights law, further information on the challenges involved in protecting that right in rural and urban contexts would be welcome.

26. **Mr. Driuchin** (Russian Federation) said that the egregious violations of the right of indigenous peoples to adequate housing were a consequence of colonization, persistent marginalization in a number of countries, forced assimilation and deeply rooted discrimination. The situation in seemingly prosperous countries warranted special attention. In Canada, the 2016 census had indicated that 19.4 per cent of Aboriginal people lived in a dwelling that needed major repairs, and 18.3 per cent lived in crowded housing. In Hawaii, indigenous populations had almost twice the rate of overcrowding compared with the broader United States population. In Australia, indigenous peoples in the State of New South Wales represented 3 per cent of the overall population, but 20 per cent of the homeless population. The authorities of those countries should enable indigenous peoples to live in peace and security and guarantee their right to adequate housing without discrimination.

27. **Ms. Wang Yi** (China) said that his Government had made significant progress in ensuring the right to housing for all. It had developed a pilot city project aimed at safeguarding the right to housing while protecting historical buildings and local culture. In rural areas, it had established protection plans to restore buildings, as well as a long-term mechanism for the protection and development of traditional Chinese villages. Her Government would continue to work to improve living standards in the country and was ready to work with all parties with a view to playing a positive and constructive role in ensuring the right to housing and promoting social and economic development.

28. **Ms. Farha** (Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context) said that she was pleased that there was recognition of the abhorrent housing conditions of indigenous peoples, given that recognizing that there was a problem was the first step to solving it. There could be no solution to indigenous housing and resource issues without the full and meaningful participation of indigenous peoples themselves and their representative Governments. One example of a good practice was an urban project that she had visited in Mexico City in which indigenous peoples had created a vibrant and culturally relevant housing complex. However, the project had been established following an excessively slow process of regularization. In that regard, she encouraged Member States to expedite such processes to ensure security of tenure, an obligation under the right to housing.

29. Cases of marginalization and violence against indigenous women were related to their relationship to

land and housing. Indigenous women were less secure if they lacked access to adequate housing and those who experienced violence in their own homes often had nowhere to turn to. Indigenous communities often had community property frameworks in place that were based on a patriarchal system that prevented women from owning property. In cases in which indigenous people were evicted from their lands, women were sometimes denied compensation as a result of patriarchal patterns. That in turn exacerbated women's poverty and prevented their economic autonomy, which increased their marginalization and vulnerability to violence.

30. On a recent visit to Nigeria she had visited a community with no access to running potable water. Most inhabitants could not afford to pay for safe water, so they were forced to drink contaminated water, which caused cholera, diarrhoea and premature death. There was an intimate connection between the rights to water, sanitation and housing and the right to life. The conditions that indigenous peoples were living in were alarming and needed to be addressed on an urgent basis, as stated by the Russian delegation.

31. It would be useful to recognize the strength of the interdependence of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the right to housing under international human rights law. The Declaration was complementary to the right to housing in many ways. In accordance with article 3 of the Declaration, indigenous peoples had the right to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development, while article 10 dealt with forced relocations and the requirement of free and informed consent prior to any relocation of indigenous peoples. The Declaration provided the context and an indigenous-specific understanding of the right to housing, while the right to housing under international human rights law provided the legal standards necessary for its implementation. She strongly recommended that both the Declaration and the right to adequate housing be legislated at the domestic level so that they could be implemented in concert.

32. **The Chair** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the item.

33. **Ms. Al Abtan** (Iraq) said that her country believed in the need to build a society that guaranteed the fundamental principles of human rights. Despite the difficulties experienced following the fall of the regime of Saddam Hussein, and aware of the need to protect human rights, her country had ratified eight international human rights conventions and had also

adopted laws and legislation in line with those conventions.

34. With regard to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, her Government was working on a law to criminalize enforced disappearances, as defined in article 2 of the Convention, and was engaging in fruitful cooperation with the Committee on Enforced Disappearances. The law included a section on enforced disappearances aimed at documenting such cases and responding to questions made to the Ministry of Justice. Her Government had made significant efforts to promote and protect human rights and build a democracy that respected the fundamental freedoms of individuals as part of the fight against torture. In that context, it had prepared a bill that defined torture and inhumane treatment and included a notification system for victims to receive support.

35. **Ms. Eneström** (Sweden) said that in recent years democratic principles and values had been challenged, and freedom of expression, assembly and association had been in decline. Democratic institutions had become weaker and the democratic space for civil society had been shrinking. In that context, Sweden had launched an initiative entitled "Drive for Democracy", aimed at strengthening democracy and responding to negative trends. The initiative extended across foreign and security policy, development cooperation, trade and promotion. Human rights and the rule of law were intrinsically linked to inclusive and democratic societies and were therefore key elements for strengthening and promoting democracy. Her country was increasing its assistance to democratic processes and election authorities, as well as to free and independent media and democratic voices, such as civil society. Drive for Democracy was a human rights-based initiative aimed at improving the enjoyment of all human rights, including freedom of expression, assembly and association and promoting gender equality.

36. **Mr. Mavroyiannis** (Cyprus) said that the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Cypriots continued to be violated as a result of the 1974 invasion and ongoing occupation of part of Cyprus by Turkey. Such violations included the continued internal displacement of one third of the Greek Cypriot population; the deprivation of the right of Greek Cypriots to enjoy their homes and properties in the occupied areas and the unlawful exploitation and use of those properties; the deliberate transfer by Turkey of settlers to the occupied part of Cyprus with a view to altering the island's demographics, in violation of international humanitarian law; the significant reduction in the number of Greek Cypriots enclaved in the occupied part of the island as a

result of discriminatory treatment; the lack of information on the whereabouts of the remains of missing persons; the systematic prevention of Christian worship in the occupied territories; and the ongoing deliberate destruction of religious and cultural heritage and looting of cultural, archaeological and religious treasures.

37. Calling on Turkey once again to allow unrestricted access to all areas, including its archives, so that families could be informed about the fate of missing loved ones, Cyprus remained equally concerned about the impact of the human rights situation in Turkey on the everyday life of Cypriots in the occupied territories, reiterating the need to respect democratic values and human rights, in full compliance with international law. His Government remained committed to the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Cypriots, irrespective of ethnic origin, race and religion, in a reunited country where the rule of law would ensure the full equality of all citizens, in line with European and international standards.

38. **Mr. Rai** (Nepal) said that his country was fully committed to the protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law, and had adopted a wide range of legislative, institutional, policy and administrative measures to fulfil its national and international obligations. The Constitution of Nepal, promulgated in 2015, was founded on universally recognized human rights, fundamental freedoms and other principles such as inclusion, equality and non-discrimination, and guaranteed fair representation in all spheres of national life, including politics, governance, health, education, employment and social security. The independent and impartial judiciary system of Nepal had delivered landmark verdicts in protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

39. Nepal was a party to 24 international human rights-related conventions and protocols, including seven of the nine core international human rights instruments. The National Human Rights Commission of Nepal was an independent constitutional body that was mandated to protect and promote human rights. Six other independent constitutional commissions were empowered to work for the promotion and protection of the rights, interests and well-being of women, Dalit, indigenous peoples and the Madheshi, Tharu and Muslim communities.

40. As a member of the Human Rights Council for the period 2018–2020, Nepal would continue to play an effective role in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in a fair and equitable manner, and had presented its candidacy for re-election

for the period 2021–2023. Nepal had been one of the first countries to prepare and implement a comprehensive human rights action plan in 2004, which had contributed to mainstreaming human rights issues in its development policies and plans. The Government was mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals into its development plans, including those related to the promotion and protection of human rights.

41. **Ms. Theofili** (Greece) said that the presence of her country at United Nations human rights forums was linked to its national human rights policy, which was based on the principles of substantive equality, diversity and non-discrimination. The recently adopted law on the promotion of substantive gender equality and the prevention and combating of gender-based violence provided for gender mainstreaming in all sectors of private and public life and the establishment of a national mechanism for gender equality. The Government was currently drafting its national action plan on women and peace and security, the aim of which was to promote the equal participation of women in decision-making and leadership at all levels. The Government continued to focus on the protection of the principle of freedom of the media from violations and abuses, emphasizing the safety of women media professionals working in conflict environments – an aspect that was reflected in the draft resolution on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity to be considered during the current session.

42. Although 47 years had passed since the military invasion and illegal occupation of almost 37 per cent of the territory of Cyprus, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Cyprus continued to be violated. The worst consequence of the Turkish invasion, notwithstanding the loss of lives, was the humanitarian problem of missing persons and their families, among them Greek nationals. Almost 200,000 Greek Cypriots remained internally displaced. Under recent plans made by Turks and Turkish Cypriots, the city of Varosha, which had been fenced since the Turkish invasion, would be colonized by Turkish settlers in direct violation of relevant Security Council resolutions. The demographic character of the occupied part of Cyprus was being altered as a result of the illegal influx of Turkish settlers. Although Turkey had in recent years adopted some measures related to the educational and religious rights of enclaved Greek Cypriots, it was too little too late. Another issue of grave concern was the widespread looting and destruction of the Christian and Hellenic cultural heritage of Cyprus in the occupied territory. Greece fully supported the efforts led by the United Nations for an agreed, comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus issue.

43. **Mr. Castañeda Solares** (Guatemala) said that his Government had continuously endeavoured to strengthen national and international mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, with an emphasis on prevention. The Government had prioritized its policy of zero tolerance for corruption and promoted the modernization of the State, recognizing that development and the overall well-being of the population required a modern State system that efficiently and appropriately managed public funds to ensure the comprehensive development of citizens. In line with the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace of 1996 and the recommendations made by bodies of the universal and inter-American human rights systems, Guatemala had taken steps to support and monitor the implementation of the Agreement. The 2030 Agenda had been incorporated into the national development plan.

44. Guatemala had undergone the universal periodic review in 2017. Guatemala had hosted the fifty-seventh special session of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, in March 2017, and had accepted visits from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, from 31 July to 4 August 2017, and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, in May 2018. The current Government had engaged constructively in periodic reviews on the rights of persons with disabilities, the elimination of discrimination against women, the rights of the child, civil and political rights, torture, migrant workers and racial discrimination. The Government was currently preparing its midterm reports for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee against Torture and its fourth periodic report for the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

45. Together with El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico, the Government was currently developing a comprehensive development plan that addressed the root causes of migration, with a view to eliminating irregular migration and, above all, protecting the human rights of migrants. Recognizing the important work of human rights defenders, the Government was drafting a national policy for human rights defenders with advice from the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and support from the European Union.

46. **Mr. Aye** (Myanmar) said that human rights issues should be approached in a constructive, non-confrontational manner, taking into account the capacity constraints of the countries concerned. Aggressive “naming and shaming” and exerting unwarranted pressure were often counterproductive and led to Member States being divided into opposing camps. If countries wanted to pursue country-specific cases, they should do so without

politicization, bias and selectivity. A practical and not an ideological approach must be taken to the fulfilment of human rights.

47. To address the issue of accountability in Rakhine State, the Government had established an independent commission of inquiry in August 2018. The commission was tasked with investigating allegations of human rights violations and developing recommendations to ensure peace and stability in Rakhine State. The evidence collection and verification team of the commission had visited Bangladesh in August 2019 and was currently awaiting approval from the Government of Bangladesh to collect detailed evidence from displaced persons living in the camps in the country.

48. Since the beginning of the crisis, the Government had explicitly expressed its willingness to receive all verified displaced persons who had left the country after the terrorist attacks of October 2016 and August 2017. Myanmar had signed bilateral agreements with Bangladesh to implement the repatriation process. Myanmar had repeatedly asked Bangladesh to strictly comply with the provisions of the agreements, in particular to distribute the agreed forms to potential returnees, including more than 400 Hindus. Bangladesh should also take effective security measures to encourage potential returnees to express their desire to return without fear of reprisal from Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) terrorists and radical groups.

49. If a country was willing to improve its situation, it should be given the time and space to deal with its complex domestic challenges to advance human rights. Myanmar would continue its efforts with international partners to have a meaningful dialogue and achieve a durable solution in Rakhine State.

50. **Mr. Driuchin** (Russian Federation) said that, while his delegation fully recognized the need to continuously develop international law, it was concerned by the methods and approaches that were being employed to do so. New legal concepts, norms and standards should be developed in a collective and consensus-based manner at the United Nations. It was a matter of deep concern that new legal initiatives were not being developed and agreed upon by interested States at the United Nations and that so-called “soft law” instruments and legally binding documents were being developed within the Human Rights Council. In recent years, the Human Rights Council had adopted a significant number of so-called “guiding principles”, which were poorly drafted from a legal standpoint and were full of legal contradictions. Most of them had political overtones. Such guiding principles were adopted blindly, without intergovernmental drafting and

agreement, and often without a vote. International human rights law was therefore being padded out with new norms and standards that were contrary to the obligations of States under international human rights instruments.

51. States should return to developing new instruments in an intergovernmental format with due consideration for the principle of consensus and the need to reach mutually acceptable solutions. His delegation called upon all States that were planning to engage in norm-setting in the near future to take its concerns into consideration. It also urged States that hurled proposals to develop new international legally binding human rights at the Human Rights Council to keep in mind that new standards should be developed in a collective and consensus-based manner.

52. In their general comments, treaty bodies increasingly overstepped the relevant international agreement, covering matters that were irrelevant to their expertise and creating new obligations under the agreement. States were even requested to submit official reports on the status of implementation of general comments. Such an approach was contrary to the letter and spirit of international agreements, artificially politicized the dialogue between national delegations and committee experts, and undermined the international regime for the protection of human rights. The effectiveness of the work of treaty bodies, whose main purpose should be to provide assistance to States parties in fulfilling their obligations, could be guaranteed through their rigorous compliance with their mandates and their readiness to hold open, constructive and mutually respectful dialogues with States parties.

53. States were increasingly taking more politicized approaches to pressing issues in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights. Accusatory human rights rhetoric was employed more frequently to justify interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States and introduce unilateral economic restrictions that were inherently illegal. Loose interpretations of human rights standards and attempts to undermine the fundamental principles of international law under the pretext of protecting human rights were unacceptable. States that portrayed themselves as “old” democracies were concerned not so much with the dignity and rights of every citizen as with their own economic and geopolitical goals.

54. Hence the notorious policy of double standards. Western States were determined to turn a blind eye to Ukraine and the Baltic countries, where xenophobic anti-Russian hysteria prevailed, national minorities continued to be blatantly squeezed out of all spheres of

society, and attacks on freedom of expression, persecution of dissidents and pressure on unwanted media were hushed up. Little mention was made of the systemic discrimination against indigenous peoples in Canada, which had gone on for decades and constituted a monstrous violation of human rights. No one criticized the excessive use of force by law enforcement agencies to disperse protests in European countries and the New World.

55. Certain Member States, under the pretext of freedom of speech, were unwilling to unequivocally condemn international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and counter the spread of neo-Nazi ideology and the activities of extreme right radical movements and groups. Despite efforts in many regions, racism and aggressive nationalism were on the rise, historical revisionism was gaining momentum and Nazi crimes and collaborators were being exonerated. It was surprising to see the silent complicity of the European Union, both in the “war” initiated in a number of European countries against monuments honouring those who had fought against Nazism during the Second World War and in the holding of neo-Nazi parades and gatherings.

56. Not only in the Middle East but also in Europe, Christians experienced discrimination and persecution. Religious persons and members of the clergy were attacked, beaten and murdered. The desecration and destruction of Christian symbols often went unpunished. In Europe, there had been a sharp rise in anti-Islamic sentiment, and attacks by ultranationalists and the desecration of mosques and religious symbols had increased. The insistence of certain members of the international community on using religion as a tool for geopolitical influence had led not to the elimination of religious conflicts, but rather to their expansion.

57. Crackdowns on the rights of journalists in Europe had consistently increased. There had been an unprecedented number of violations of the rights of Russian journalists, which they repeatedly experienced while carrying out their professional work in a number of foreign countries.

58. **Ms. Batsuren** (Mongolia) said that under the Constitution, the international treaties to which her country was a party had the same effect as national legislation. To bring the body of national laws into line with international commitments and standards, the Government had revised the International Treaty Act in 2016.

59. Since extending a standing invitation to special procedure mandate holders in 2004, Mongolia had been visited by the special rapporteurs on the right to food,

on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, on the right to education, on extreme poverty and human rights, on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment and on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as by the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. Most recently, Mongolia had been visited, at the invitation of the Government, by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, in May 2019, and by the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, in September 2019. The Special Rapporteur and the Independent Expert would submit comprehensive reports on their visits to Mongolia to the Human Rights Council in March 2020.

60. The Government strongly supported the universal periodic review and, in October 2019, had submitted its midterm progress report on the implementation of the recommendations made during the universal periodic review. The Government had been working closely with civil society to implement the national action plan on the implementation of those recommendations, and an ex officio board chaired by the Minister of Justice and Home Affairs and comprising ministers, heads of agencies and representatives of civil society organizations had been established to monitor its implementation. Collaboration with and inputs from civil society organizations and the National Human Rights Commission were critical for the implementation of the recommendations made during the universal periodic review.

61. **Ms. Norman-Chalet** (United States of America) said that her Government condemned the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for its use of torture and arbitrary detention to silence individuals exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms and called for the release of the more than 600 people who remained in prison for peacefully demanding reform, together with the United States citizens wrongfully detained by the regime.

62. In China, the human rights crisis in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region was deeply troubling, in particular the detention of more than 1 million Uighurs, ethnic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz people and other Muslims in re-education camps since April 2017. In Hong Kong, the excessive use of force against protestors and journalists remained a concern.

63. Her Government condemned the Syrian regime and its Russian and Iranian enablers for their role in the violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law perpetrated throughout the conflict. The United States opposed the offensive by Turkey into the north-eastern part of the Syrian Arab Republic, which was undermining the campaign to defeat Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and threatening peace, security and stability in the region. Turkey must respect its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and those responsible for human rights abuses must be held accountable.

64. Her delegation was gravely concerned by the restrictions imposed by the Government and the military in Myanmar on human rights and fundamental freedoms, their use of dubious legal charges against journalists, peaceful protestors and members of ethnic minority communities, and their failure to address the root causes of the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya from northern Rakhine State.

65. Her delegation condemned the sustained, widespread and gross human rights violations by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and called for the dismantlement of the political prison camp system, in which approximately 100,000 individuals were detained.

66. In the Russian Federation, the ongoing pressure on civil society and media and the growing number of prisoners detained for their political or religious views were deeply troubling. Those responsible for extrajudicial detentions, torture and killings of men who were gay or perceived to be gay in Chechnya should be held accountable. Her delegation condemned the ongoing aggression by the Russian Federation in eastern Ukraine and its repressive occupation of Crimea. The Russian authorities must release all Ukrainians who had been arbitrarily or unlawfully detained and end the violent raids and other reprisals against Crimean Tatars.

67. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the population continued to suffer as the corrupt Maduro regime enriched its officials, committed widespread human rights violations and blocked the restoration of democracy through free and fair elections.

68. Her delegation called on the Government of Nicaragua stop killing, threatening and intimidating people to quash dissent, and to heed the call of its citizens for democratic rule and respect for human rights, to be achieved through free and fair elections.

69. The Cuban regime must immediately end its repression of the Cuban people and its economic

exploitation and mismanagement, and cease violating the human rights of prisoners of conscience, political dissidents, human rights activists and journalists. Her delegation condemned the Cuban regime's assault on the democracy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

70. In South Sudan, the ongoing mass atrocities, including the use of rape as a weapon of war, were deeply troubling. In Burundi, her delegation remained concerned by ongoing human rights abuses and violations, including, according to the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, possible crimes against humanity. In Egypt, the shrinking space for independent voices and peaceful dissent was of concern. In Yemen, her delegation condemned the unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers by multiple parties to the conflict and was gravely concerned about reports of Houthi militias using civilians as human shields, confiscating humanitarian supplies and detaining activists, journalists and members of religious minorities.

71. **Mr. Al Khalil** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking on a point of order, said that his country was called the Syrian Arab Republic, not the "Syrian regime".

72. **Ms. Alnesf** (Qatar) said that, in the light of the achievements of her country in enforcing labour laws and ensuring a dignified life for migrant workers, the International Labour Organization (ILO) had welcomed the comprehensive measures taken by Qatar, including the reform of the kafalah system, and the contribution of the Qatari international cooperation programme to reinforcing social justice and ensuring adequate work. Such recognition by ILO was testament to the success of Qatar in implementing the agreed conventions. The Government had cooperated with the ILO office that had been opened in Doha in 2018.

73. Qatar was determined to play an active role in the promotion and protection of human rights as a member of the Human Rights Council for four terms. Qatar also hosted the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region. Qatar looked forward to the implementation of the agreement adopted earlier that month between the Education Above All Foundation and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which reinforced the rights of young people and empowered them socially and economically.

74. The ongoing unlawful blockade of Qatar was a blatant violation of international law that served to further aggravate tensions globally and set a dangerous precedent that legitimized the violation of human rights. Despite the negative ramifications of the blockade, Qatar upheld the rights of its citizens and residents and remained a leader in terms of human development

indicators regionally and internationally. Qatar also participated in humanitarian cooperation and international peacekeeping efforts.

75. **Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) said that, as a current member of the Human Rights Council, his country would continue to strengthen the universal system for the promotion and protection of human rights and would also work with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to that end.

76. Older persons must be recognized and empowered as active rights holders. Unfortunately, the current international legal framework for human rights did not sufficiently guarantee the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons. Only a universal, specific and binding instrument could provide sufficient standards to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights in old age.

77. His delegation welcomed the renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity by the Human Rights Council. The scale, gravity and pervasive nature of that type of violence and discrimination required a specific response of the Council through a specialized mechanism. His delegation also actively supported the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, in particular the action plan to improve accessibility and the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities across the entire United Nations system, and called upon Member States to work together to implement it.

78. Argentina was unwavering in its commitment to abolish the death penalty. It had ratified all the international and regional instruments related to the abolition of the death penalty and supported various relevant initiatives, such as the Global Alliance to end trade in goods used for capital punishment and torture. Argentina was also firmly committed to working towards the universal ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

79. **Dame Karen Pierce** (United Kingdom) said that it was her Government's policy that the United Kingdom would leave the European Union on 31 October 2019. Thereafter, the United Kingdom would continue to work closely with the European Union in pursuit of shared interests and values and would remain committed to the rules-based international system. The United Kingdom would robustly defend human rights at the United Nations and beyond.

80. Her Government was resolutely committed to championing freedom of religion or belief and would never stand by while individuals were persecuted, designated as “extremist” or arbitrarily detained because of their religion or ethnicity. The Government would continue to advance gender equality and vigorously defend the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. Attempts to roll back hard-won gains on access to sexual and reproductive health were a shameful attack on women’s rights. The United Kingdom would host a conference on preventing sexual violence in conflict with the objective of strengthening justice for survivors and holding perpetrators to account. It was unacceptable to remain silent while people faced persecution on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity. All too often State authorities allowed the perpetrators of such hate crimes to escape justice.

81. A flourishing civil society and media freedom were vital for safeguarding human rights. Media workers should never live in fear for their lives for doing their jobs. Her delegation encouraged those Member States that had not yet signed the global pledge on media freedom to do so. Her country was committed to championing civil society in the field and in discussions at the United Nations, and was therefore pleased to announce its candidacy for the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations.

82. **Monsignor Hansen** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the international community must recommit itself to the ideal that recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family was the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. That ideal must be grounded in a correct understanding of the human person, with particular attention to those who were the most vulnerable. Pope Francis had observed that numerous forms of injustice persisted, fed by reductive anthropological visions and by a profit-based economic model. The current landscape called into question whether the equal dignity of all human beings was truly recognized, respected and promoted in every circumstance.

83. Without grounding considerations of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms in a correct understanding of the inherent dignity of the human person, the common understanding of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and discussions on promoting fair and free elections, protecting human rights in conflict and in the face of terrorism, ending arbitrary executions and enforced disappearances, and addressing hunger and the lack of access to safe drinking water could easily become superficial and politicized.

Unfortunately, such a risk was ever present in the consideration of efforts to combat persecution on the basis of religion or belief and to ensure that migrants, refugees, members of ethnic, national, religious or linguistic minorities, and internally displaced persons enjoyed the full protection of the law. In all those crucial matters, the Holy See called for a constant focus on the dignity and the centrality of every human person in all aspects of civil, political, economic, religious, social and cultural life.

84. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the apartheid practices of the Israeli regime combined with aggression, colonizing policies and the unlawful and inhumane blockade continued unabated with the unconditional support of the United States. Millions of civilians continued to live in despair in the State of Palestine, including in Gaza, the biggest open prison of the world.

85. In the United States, grave violations of human rights persisted at both the national and the international levels, including racial and ethnic profiling, hate speech by high-ranking politicians against Muslims, persons of African descent, women, Native Americans, migrants and refugees, and police force brutality against African Americans, migrants and other minorities. Thousands of innocent migrant children had been separated from their parents and incarcerated in inhumane conditions. Bigoted measures, such as the Muslim ban, remained in effect. No end was in sight for the extensive torture, extrajudicial killings and other violations of human rights committed by the United States army in the Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, Bagram, Nama and Balad camps. The overt and covert operations of the regime in Washington, D.C., to destabilize legitimate Governments and stir conflict and disorder were bearing a heavy brunt on the human rights of hundreds of millions around the world.

86. In Canada, another proponent of the Israeli apartheid regime, systematic discrimination against indigenous peoples in terms of access to health, education and employment had resulted in their overrepresentation in courts and prison settings. Hate crimes and hate speech against members of racial and religious minorities, in particular Muslims, and continued targeting, profiling and harassment by police and security agencies were matters of serious concern.

87. The genocidal United States unilateral sanctions were a manifestation of crimes against humanity. The economic terrorism practised by the regime in Washington, D.C., was in stark defiance of the letter and spirit of the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The United States had also refused to comply with the provisions of the Order of the International Court of Justice of 3 October 2018.

88. His delegation was disappointed by the continuation of double standards, selectivity and politicization in the consideration of human rights issues, as manifested by the introduction of country-specific mandates and resolutions. His Government was committed to constructive cooperation with OHCHR and invited the High Commissioner to visit the country. The Islamic Republic of Iran had presented its midterm voluntary report on the implementation of the recommendations made during the universal periodic review in 2017 and would undergo its third cycle of the universal periodic review in November 2019.

89. **Ms. Al Abbasi** (Bahrain) said that her country was committed to upholding the freedom of religion and belief and to spreading the values of Islam, which rejected extremism and promoted tolerance. Freedom of religion was enshrined in the Constitution and in law and was guaranteed for all citizens and expats in Bahrain. Holy sites, such as mosques, churches and Jewish and Hindu holy sites, were hosted in Bahrain, demonstrating the spirit of coexistence and respect for others that existed in its society.

90. Among the significant initiatives to promote peaceful coexistence were the adoption of a universal declaration to promote freedom of religion and belief and the establishment of the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence, in Bahrain, and the King Hamad Chair in Interfaith Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence, at Sapienza University in Rome, Italy. Her delegation welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of the initiative of the Prime Minister of Bahrain to celebrate an International Day of Conscience.

91. **Ms. Rivera Reyes** (Honduras) said that her delegation welcomed in particular the report of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families contained in document [A/74/48](#) and stressed that human rights should feature prominently in the global migration agenda. As a signatory to the nine core international human rights instruments of the United Nations system and the American Convention on Human Rights, Honduras had demonstrated its willingness to uphold its international commitments and had progressively adopted guiding principles related to different topics on a voluntary basis.

92. Honduras was committed to the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and therefore supported the establishment of the International Migration Review Forum, which would be the primary global intergovernmental platform for States to discuss the progress made in the implementation of all aspects of the Compact, including those related to the 2030 Agenda. As stipulated in the Compact, migrants and receiving communities and countries of origin, transit and destination should respect one another, since beyond any differences, they shared a common humanity and respect for the institutional framework and international law. Irregular migration should be addressed in a holistic manner, including by seeking solutions to the factors driving migration. Migration was a fundamental and necessary right. The objective should therefore not be to halt migration, but rather to eliminate the causes of forced and irregular migration.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

93. **Mr. Kyong Hyok Choe** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that, as a criminal State, Japan was not qualified to talk about the human rights situations of other countries. During its occupation of the Korean Peninsula, Japan had committed State-organized serious crimes against humanity, such as the abduction of 8.4 million young Koreans, 1 million genocidal killings and the imposition of sexual slavery on 200,000 Korean women and girls for the Japanese imperial army. Instead of acknowledging and reflecting on all its crimes against the Korean people, Japan was taking all kinds of measures to shirk its responsibility, including violent national discrimination against Koreans in Japan. It was high time for the international community to settle the historical sin of Japan that had accumulated for centuries. The abduction issue repeatedly raised by Japan had already been resolved thanks to the sincere efforts of his country. Japan should confirm the fate of the millions of Koreans abducted by Japan in the past, make a sincere apology and provide compensation to the victims.

94. **Ms. Inanç Örnekol** (Turkey) said that the representative of Greece had presented a selective, one-sided interpretation of history that conveniently omitted certain facts. In 1963, Turkish Cypriots had been forced out of government institutions and legislative and judiciary bodies, and well-documented atrocities had been committed against them. Subsequently, in 1964, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus had been deployed. Over the next 10 years, 180,000 Turkish Cypriots had been displaced and corralled into scattered enclaves, and, in 1974, Greece had instigated a coup in

an attempt to annex the island. Acting within its rights and responsibilities as a guarantor Power under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, Turkey had intervened to protect Turkish Cypriots and prevent the annexation.

95. Turkish Cypriots and the Government of Turkey had demonstrated their political will for a solution. Turkish Cypriots had overwhelmingly voted for the Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem (or the Annan Plan) and had participated in the recent talks, which had ended without an agreement. Nevertheless, Turkish Cypriots continued to experience unacceptable isolation, which the Member States should end by establishing direct economic, commercial, social and cultural relations without further delay.

96. The Turkish Cypriot authorities were making every effort to enable the work of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus to proceed unhindered. Attempts to exploit a humanitarian issue for political propaganda purposes undermined the excellent work of the Committee. To address cultural heritage issues, Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots had established a joint technical committee, which had carried out several significant projects related to sites in both parts of the island. The inventory work conducted by the Turkish Cypriot authorities to assess the condition of movable and immovable property and the environmental risks in Maraş was fully in line with international law and did not contravene existing Security Council resolutions.

97. The baseless allegations made by another delegation would be answered by its Turkish Cypriot counterpart, whose voice unfortunately could not be heard in the current forum.

98. **Ms. Cue Delgado** (Cuba) said that, if the Government of the United States were really concerned about the human rights of Cuban citizens, it would end the financial and commercial embargo that it had imposed against Cuba for almost 60 years, which had been the main obstacle for the full enjoyment by the Cuban people of their human rights. The United States, which had committed the most brutal violations against human rights and human dignity over the past century, had no authority to judge Cuba or any other country when it came to human rights. The United States had been the first and only country to use nuclear weapons against innocent civilians. It was also responsible for extrajudicial killings and had carried out acts of torture at Guantanamo Bay. Her delegation rejected the manipulation, politicization and double standards of the United States regarding human rights in Cuba. The Government of the United States, which had forcibly separated migrant children from their parents and kept them in cages and had engaged in hate speech that had

led to killings such as the one that had recently occurred in Texas, had no moral authority to talk about human rights in Cuba. The United States promoted war rather than peace and devoted vast amounts of money to the arms trade, a trade that led to more than 30,000 deaths per year in its own country. The United States could not teach lessons to other countries when it was a party to only a limited number of international human rights instruments, had unilaterally withdrawn from the Human Rights Council, had committed mass human rights violations against migrants, African Americans, Hispanics and other minorities and did not respect the right to life, peace or development.

99. **Ms. Wang Yi** (China) said that the attack by the representative of the United States on her Government's policies in Xinjiang and Hong Kong was baseless and constituted interference in the internal affairs of China. The policy in Hong Kong was aimed purely at countering terrorism. In Xinjiang, a counter-terrorism and deradicalization policy had been adopted, and it did not target any ethnic group or religion. The policies had nothing to do with human rights issues. A group of 50 countries had written to OHCHR in support of the education training centres in Xinjiang, noting that the centres clearly guaranteed the human rights of the local people.

100. The nature of the situation in Hong Kong had changed entirely. Seeking to cause disturbance, certain forces had attacked local law enforcement officials, beaten civilians and set fire to public property. The violence in the street pointed to a premeditated attack against the establishment and was posing a serious threat to the safety of the people of Hong Kong. The Hong Kong police had demonstrated professionalism and used minimum force. The central Government of China supported the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in maintaining public order. It was totally disgraceful that a certain country, in total violation of international norms, had threatened the Government of Hong Kong and had supported criminals. The United States and other relevant countries should respect the sovereignty of China and refrain from any interference in the internal affairs of Hong Kong.

101. **Mr. Furumoto** (Japan) said that, under the agreement reached in Stockholm in May 2014, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had promised to carry out a comprehensive and thorough investigation into the fate of all Japanese nationals, including the abductees. The commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had called for the return of victims and their descendants to their country of origin. The

Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should implement the Stockholm agreement and return all abductees to Japan as quickly as possible.

102. The allegations made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea contained incorrect figures and were groundless. Since the end of the Second World War, Japan had consistently respected democracy and human rights and had contributed to the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and the world. Japan invited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to bring true peace to North-East Asia by setting aside distrust and by deepening cooperation. If the delegation continued to raise the same issues, he would not exercise the right of reply, but that should not be interpreted as acquiescence.

103. **Ms. Ioannou** (Cyprus) said that the international community was in no doubt about the sovereignty of Cyprus or the fact that such sovereignty extended over the whole of the island. The rules on the use of force were clearly laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, and what had happened in Cyprus was clearly not in line with the Charter. The departure of Turkish Cypriots from government institutions in 1963 had been a deliberate policy of the Government of Turkey. Following the Turkish invasion, the occupying powers had forced Turkish Cypriots to move from Government-controlled areas to the occupied areas in an effort to create two ethnically clean areas on the island. The so-called "isolation" of the Turkish Cypriots was purely the result of the occupation and the establishment of a non-entity that was the fruit of aggression and therefore not recognized. Turkish actions in the city of Varosha were not in line with relevant resolutions of the Security Council. Turkey should heed the recent call of the Security Council for all parties to respect the relevant resolutions pertaining to the special status of the fenced area of Varosha.

104. **Mr. Kyong Hyok Choe** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the abduction issue had already been resolved thanks to the sincere efforts of his country. There was no statute of limitations on the heinous crimes committed by Japan, and Japan should make an official apology and offer compensation to all its victims.

105. **Mr. Furumoto** (Japan) reiterated that, under the agreement reached in Stockholm in May 2014, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had promised to carry out a comprehensive and thorough investigation into the fate of all Japanese nationals, including the abductees. The Government should implement the agreement and return all abductees to Japan as quickly as possible. Japan invited

the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to bring true peace to North-East Asia by setting aside distrust and by deepening cooperation.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.