



# General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

**41**<sup>st</sup> plenary meeting  
Monday, 9 December 2019, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Muhammad-Bande ..... (Nigeria)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Baati (Tunisia),  
Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

## Agenda item 11

### Sport for development and peace: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal

#### Draft resolution (A/74/L.18)

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan to introduce draft resolution A/74/L.18.

**Mr. Mori** (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to introduce draft resolution A/74/L.18, entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”. Let me start by expressing my sincere gratitude to Secretary-General Guterres and the States Members of the United Nations for giving us the opportunity to do so.

Just two weeks ago, His Holiness Pope Francis visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki and delivered the clear message that a world without nuclear weapons is not only possible but necessary. This message resonated deeply with many people in Japan. The atomic bomb was dropped and exploded over Nagasaki, where, during the Edo period, for 250 years, people had kept the Christian faith, despite its prohibition. The atomic

bomb led some Japanese people to feel that their prayers for peace would go unanswered, but the Pope’s message lit our future with hope.

Throughout the years, we have seen numerous threats to world peace, including wars. Ms. Greta Thunberg’s impassioned speech on global warming shocked, rocked and impressed people around the world, including me.

The first time I addressed the General Assembly was in 2000, at the Millennium Summit. As Prime Minister of Japan at that time, I promoted human security as one of the pillars of Japanese diplomacy and called for the United Nations to fulfil its obligations in that area. The Commission on Human Security was established in 2001 upon the initiative of the Government of Japan and then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan with a view to significantly reducing the level of human suffering and insecurity where it is most acute and prevalent. At the 2007 United Nations High Level Event on Climate Change, I stated that the challenge posed by climate change is deeply related to the goal of achieving human security for all, especially the poor and the vulnerable. At that time, I also highlighted the importance of providing assistance to developing countries.

In July 2000, the issue of infectious diseases was introduced as a main topic for the first time, when it appeared on the agenda of the Group of Eight summit held in Kyushu-Okinawa, at which debate I presided. In 2001, I attended the special session on HIV/AIDS and engaged in candid dialogue with current Secretary-General Guterres, who has been playing an outstanding

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role in addressing this topic at the United Nations, as a result of which support was marshalled to establish the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Despite these years of striving to contribute to a world of peace and prosperity, the harsh reality is that I have had to admit my limitations. Nevertheless, I will not give up on a world of peace and prosperity, no matter how difficult it is to attain. The Olympic Truce draft resolution (A/74.L.18) gives me hope because it makes me aware that I am not alone. It is the embodiment of the shared hopes of people across the globe that we can free the world of conflict, at least during the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and that we can live together in mutual understanding and respect and with unity in diversity.

I am truly humbled today to be able to address the United Nations for a fifth time. Whenever I have stood at this rostrum I have always kept my prayers for human security and world peace and prosperity in mind. Today I especially feel the presence with me of former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, who regrettably passed away in October. Mrs. Ogata, a special adviser to the organizing committee for the Tokyo 2020 Games, was a true friend. She accompanied me when, as Prime Minister of Japan, I visited the African continent for the first time, in 2001. She led me and our party through the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. My Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary at that time, future Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, joined me for the entirety of the trip. Prime Minister Abe and I have committed to continuing to work towards world peace and prosperity, carrying on the cherished aspirations of the late Mrs. Ogata.

I was extremely impressed by International Olympic Committee President Bach's compelling thoughts on world peace during our numerous discussions on the Tokyo 2020 Games. President Bach has repeatedly told both Prime Minister Abe and me that, in his view, the global Olympic Truce initiative is something of great value. We agree. He also expressed that thought to the leaders who attended the Group of 20 summit at Osaka in July. Today I hope to convey that sentiment through the members of the General Assembly to the entire world.

Peace is the concept at the root of Olympism. The ancient Greeks competed in the Olympics some 2,800 years ago as a substitute for engaging in war. That idea is today at the heart of the Olympic Truce. I believe that

it is our mission to promote Olympism and pass it down to future generations.

I attended the Tokyo 1964 Games when I was 27 years old. Looking back, I remember deeply feeling and appreciating the peace that allowed athletes of different countries to come together to celebrate the Games. The Tokyo 1964 Olympic and Paralympic Games were, for the Japanese people, an important symbol of their recovery from the Second World War, as it showcased for the world how Japan had come back from the utter destruction it had faced just 19 years prior. The 1964 Olympics also unleashed the positive energy of the Japanese people and led to dramatic economy growth.

I am delighted that in the same city of Tokyo, in 2020, the second Olympic and Paralympic Games will showcase Japan's peaceful and fully mature cities for the world, as well as our recovery efforts in the disaster-affected Tohoku area of the country. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the help and support we have received from all over the world after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. We hope that our recovery efforts can be a source of encouragement to those in Japan and throughout the world who have suffered the severe consequences of natural disasters. Giving courage to one another and standing together will help us all be stronger.

Having realized through the Olympic and Paralympic Games how precious peace is, Japan wishes to give everyone in the world the opportunity to appreciate peace through sports. To that end, we have devised an international contribution-through-sport initiative called "Sport for Tomorrow", which is designed to provide opportunities for people to interact with people from different countries across the globe. We seek to use sports to develop human resources by setting a target of involving over 10 million people across more than 100 countries by 2020. We recently reached the 10 million mark, including many Japanese young people. To advance the trust and mutual understanding among peoples that peace is built upon, the Host Town project, a new initiative affiliated with the Tokyo 2020 Games will provide an opportunity for heart-warming, grass-roots communication between athletes and the residents of local communities in Japan, who will cheer on the athletes they are hosting.

The main theme of our Games is unity in diversity. World peace could be realized if all peoples around

the world lived together in mutual acceptance and respect. The Tokyo 2020 organizing committee put this theme into practice by becoming the first organizing committee in history to operate the Olympic and Paralympic Games through a single organization. It has therefore been able to show the remarkable benefits of unity in diversity. Furthermore, Tokyo will be the first city to host the summer Paralympic Games for a second time.

Through the twin lenses of unity in diversity and living together peaceably on our precious Earth, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games are also committed to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To this end, we have made the gold, silver and bronze medals for the Games out of recycled metals extracted from small electronic devices no longer in use, such as old mobile phones. Similarly, the materials used in the Paralympic and Olympic torches, the relays of which will start on 26 March 2020, come partially from recycled aluminium originally used in the construction of prefabricated housing units following the 2011 disaster. The podiums for the victory ceremonies will be made with recycled plastic, including marine plastic waste. Through such pioneering efforts, we hope that the Tokyo 2020 Games will be a beacon of light that illuminates the way to building a sustainable world, including through the SDGs.

The 2019 Rugby World Cup, hosted by Japan in November, was the first World Cup to be held in Asia and the first to be held outside the developed countries where rugby is widely played. World Rugby Chairman Sir William Blackledge Beaumont hailed the remarkable success of the tournament, saying it was the “probably the greatest Rugby World Cup” in the event’s 32-year history. Television viewership peaked at 53.7 per cent of the Japanese population, and the number of visitors to the 16 fan zones across Japan reached a new record, approximately 1.13 million people. Close communication at 55 team camps spread across 61 municipalities had the great fortune of furthering world peace, as well as the cause of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games next year. We will make every effort to extend the successful experience of the Rugby World Cup to the 2020 Tokyo Games. Everywhere one went, venues were packed. As I have said elsewhere, people had not realized that there were so many rugby fans in Japan. Their great number — as well as the great success of the Rugby World Cup in

general — stems from the close communication between athletes and the local municipalities.

I believe that what is marvellous about sport is the delight that comes with overcoming challenges to achieve what was previously thought unachievable. I will be 82 years old in the coming year. This could be my last opportunity to stand before the General Assembly. What I have learned through sport has sustained my political career and life all these years. By showing through sport that the impossible can be made possible, our hope is to demonstrate that wars can disappear from the globe, not just during the Olympic Games but forever. If leaders are courageous enough to openly share their opinions no matter how difficult it may be to do so, agreements could replace fighting.

On the international stage, tensions are rising. Small countries are suffering from confrontation between large countries, and we cannot overlook the suffering of the vulnerable. I therefore wish to repeat my prayer for peace and prosperity in the world and express my belief once again that, as set forth in the 2020 Tokyo Games vision, sport has the power to change the world and the future.

I am delighted to inform the General Assembly today that more than 180 Member States are supporting the draft resolution contained in A/74/L.18, submitted by Japan. I would like once again to express my gratitude to the Assembly for giving me this opportunity to address this body and to ask all its members for their support in adopting the draft resolution today.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express our deep gratitude for the depth of the representative of Japan’s statement, particularly its emphasis on the role that multilateralism, sport and the Olympic and Paralympic Games can play in strengthening relations among Member States.

**Mrs. Harqoos** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to take part in this important discussion on sport for peace and development. I will briefly outline the priorities of the United Arab Emirates, which recognizes the important role of sport in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and utilizing it in the service of humanity and peace. We are pleased to join today the more than 170 sponsors of draft resolution A/74/L.18.

The United Arab Emirates believes in the importance of harnessing and enhancing

sporting abilities, especially among persons with disabilities — or those who, in our country, we refer to as persons of determination — which it does in keeping with its commitment to implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and in its full realization of the need to integrate such persons into society.

The United Arab Emirates hosted the 2019 Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi, where over 7,500 athletes from 190 States took part. This was the first time they had been held in the Middle East since the Special Olympics were founded 50 years ago. Furthermore, we hosted the World Para Athletics Championships in Dubai last month, at which over 1,400 athletes from 122 States came to compete in track and field events. The Championships were the last qualifier for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games.

My country attaches particular importance to building a society that enjoys a high degree of knowledge and stronger cultural awareness of jiu-jitsu as an inspiring sport that enhances discipline and respect for one's competitor, as well as perseverance, patience and self-confidence. The United Arab Emirates hosted the World Jiu-Jitsu Championship last month, in which 1,500 men and women athletes from 65 States around the world, including a United Arab Emirates women's team, came to participate under one umbrella. The tournament was conducted collectively and covered all the different categories. It was the first time in the history of jiu-jitsu that a tournament was held in a single place and time.

The United Arab Emirates also seeks to nurture and support young sporting talent by holding round tables and exchanging ideas with decision-makers. Young people in my country recently held a youth panel discussion on the topic of sporting youth leaderships. The discussions focused on three main themes pertaining to key challenges that young Emirati athletes and leaders in the sports field managed to overcome, academic courses related to sports administration, and mechanisms for obtaining officials posts in various sports.

In the lead-up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, the United Arab Emirates held the International Sports Creativity Conference under the theme "Tolerance and peace in sport", in which a group of young medallists from the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games and the 2018 Buenos Aires Youth Olympic Games participated.

This event was part of our efforts aimed at supporting and building the capacity of young Arab athletes so that they may earn more Olympic medals and other international titles and medals, especially at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

In closing, my country's hosting of the aforementioned international tournaments and our welcoming of elite athletes from around the world are not only in line with the United Nations action plan to use sport to promote development and peace but also embodies the tolerance that the United Arab Emirates adopted as its national theme for 2019. As the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations approaches next year, we believe that this is an important opportunity to recall the comprehensive role that sports can play in achieving goals of development and peace and in fostering noble values among the peoples of the world.

**Ms. Shareef** (Maldives): The Maldives is pleased to support and join in co-sponsoring today's draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/74/L.18). The Maldives thanks Japan for its successful efforts in coordinating the draft resolution. Let me also take this opportunity to extend my delegation's congratulations and best wishes to Japan on its hosting of the imminent 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. We are confident that these Olympics will be an important opportunity to bring people together and harness the power of sport in promoting peace, tolerance and solidarity.

Sports can heal wounds, mend fences and cause people to rise above their differences. Sport has the power to change the world and transform humankind. Sport, especially the Olympic ideal, has helped bring together people of different cultures and nationalities, continuing to enhance mutual understanding through the spirit of friendship and fair play. To this day, the Olympic torch symbolizes not only achievements in sports but also a bridge that joins diverse communities together and promotes tolerance and social inclusion. This is the spirit of the Olympic Games. The Maldives is proud to have been an active participant in the Olympic movement since 1988. Since assuming office in 2018, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih of the Maldives has given high priority to promoting education, inclusiveness and better health through sport, which fosters tolerance, understanding and cooperation within society.

The Maldives continues to make significant investments in sports infrastructure and promotes opportunities for all. The Maldives has made it a policy to designate a sports councillor for each of its islands, which will enable the establishment of equal pay between men and women in national sports teams and boost female participation in sports, which in turn will encourage the dissolution of traditional gender stereotypes. Investments in sports will encourage greater participation from young people in various athletic fields and help them develop leadership skills to become positive role models in their communities and promote economic and social progress. Implementing sports programmes at the national and local levels is important to facilitate sustainable development and peaceful coexistence. Our commitment to investing in sports is rooted in our conviction that sports can promote peace and development, as reflected in all 17 goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Maldives is proud of the fact that it will be hosting the eleventh edition of the Indian Ocean Island Games in 2023, which will be the first time that the Maldives will host these Games, which have been held among the Indian Ocean island nations for 43 years. The Maldives believes that organizing this event will help us not only promote sports at home, but also help bring together future generations in cooperation and harmony. The Maldives believes that the Indian Ocean Island Games will foster friendship and mutual understanding and, through regional cooperation, create a spirit of solidarity among all participating States.

The Government accords a high priority to raising a new generation of health-conscious and active Maldivians. We recently launched the Mission Fit Maldives campaign to underline the national importance of achieving the collective goal of a healthier and fitter nation. In order to promote sports as a vehicle for peace and development, it is important that sports policies be inclusive, leaving no one behind. The Government intends to modify at least 80 per cent of sports facilities by 2023 in order to provide access to people with disabilities and furnish women and girls with equal opportunities to participate more fully in national sports programmes.

There is no social activity more than sports that brings people together in such great numbers with so much passion and enjoyment. Regardless of age or gender, sports are enjoyed by all. Sport inspires a nobler cause, namely, the spirit of tolerance, togetherness,

respect and social inclusion. We must continue to truly recognize the power that sport has to change the lives of individuals and rebuild communities for greater peace, resilience and prosperity.

**Mr. Al-Kuwari (Qatar)** (*spoke in Arabic*): We are pleased to take part in today's important debate and join the sponsors of the draft resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (A/74/L.18) and others in the General Assembly in adopting it. We welcome the content of the draft resolution, which highlights the valuable contribution sport makes in many key areas, including promoting tolerance and understanding among peoples, education, sustainable development, solidarity, fairness, social inclusion and health, as well as in combating terrorism and violent extremism that leads to terrorism.

The State of Qatar attaches special importance to sport because we believe that it can create positive social change that enhances peace and development. With a view to achieving our national vision for 2030, the State of Qatar has significantly invested in building and developing sports facilities and related infrastructure in accordance with international standards. As a result, Qatar has been able to successfully host such major sporting events as the 2006 Asian Games, the 2015 International Paralympic Committee Athletics World Championships and other international tournaments. Most recently, Qatar hosted the 2019 World Athletics Championship, which concluded in October and saw the participation of 2,000 male and female athletes from 209 States. Doha recently hosted the 24th Arabian Gulf Cup Championship. Moreover, this week, the State of Qatar will be holding the 2019 FIFA Club World Cup.

Qatar also looks forward to hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup tournament, which will be the first of its type in the Middle East and the Arab world, and has offered all the necessary capabilities to make it an historic opportunity and championship legacy for Qatar, the region and the world. The tournament will greatly contribute to enhancing the values of peace and tolerance among all the peoples of the world.

The Qatar Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy is playing an important role in achieving those goals. Several programmes and initiatives have been launched, including Challenge 22, the Generation Amazing programme and the Josoor Institute. Those initiatives are aimed at empowering Arab young people to participate in the preparations to host the FIFA

championship and at providing them with the tools and skills to build a better future.

I would like to note the role of the Qatar Olympic Committee, which has accomplished a great deal at the national and international levels. It has supported the Olympic movement in accordance with the principles of the Olympic Charter and is spreading the culture of the Olympics as widely as possible. The Committee encourages participation in sport among all sectors of society, promotes the development of athletes and trainers, equipping them according to international standards, and hosts local, regional and international sporting events.

As the next host of the FIFA World Cup in 2022, Qatar aspires to host an eco-friendly championship. It will be the first tournament of its kind to be carbon neutral, thanks to the use of solar energy on the fields and cooling and lighting technology that saves energy and water.

Through the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, which Qatar co-chairs with Monaco, my country seeks to enhance cooperation at the international level in order to highlight the important role that sport plays in enhancing sustainable development and peace, especially by encouraging tolerance, respect and community empowerment.

Qatar attaches special importance to preventing terrorist attacks on unfortified locations, such as sports facilities. It offers the capabilities and expertise it has gained in enhancing international cooperation and in capacity-building, in its collaboration with competent international parties. Moreover, an agreement has been signed between the Qatar-based International Centre For Sport Security, which is a non-profit Organization, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in order to create a new form of cooperation in the prevention of attacks on sporting events and in the prevention, through sport, of violent extremism that leads to terrorism.

We also recognize the importance of sport in stopping violent extremism. In that regard, we have worked with the United States of America, UNODC and Football for Peace in organizing a special event on enhancing sports capabilities to prevent violent extremism on the margins of the General Assembly's high-level debate in September. Moreover, Qatar supports ongoing efforts to prevent crime and violence among young people through the UNODC Global

Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration, which managed to reach 6,000 young men and women by offering life-skills programmes through sport as part of the Line Up, Live Up initiative, with the goal of preventing drug use, violence and crime.

In conclusion, we affirm the Qatari State's willingness to cooperate with the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee in order to make sport a tool to enhance peace, dialogue and reconciliation.

**Ms. Picco** (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): Today, the States Members of the United Nations are renewing their trust in the power of sport by adopting draft resolution A/74/L.18, on building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal.

In a few months' time, we will once again experience the rhythm of the events and performances of Olympic and Paralympic athletes who inspire us both through the records they set and through their excellence. When the Olympic flame is lit in Tokyo in July, Japan will have the honour of hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games for the fourth time, just a few months after the success of the Rugby World Cup. I commend the Japanese delegation for the draft resolution we will adopt.

The introduction of new disciplines such as baseball/softball, sport climbing, karate, skateboarding and surfing attests to the stated ambition to attract new generations. In that respect, the success of the Youth Olympic Games, held in Buenos Aires in 2018, served to strengthen the link between the Olympic movement and young people around the world. We eagerly await the Games to be held in Lausanne in a few weeks.

Japan, host of the thirty-second Olympic Games and the sixteenth Paralympic Games, seeks the participation of young people and the entire population in this global event par excellence. Through its Sport for Tomorrow and Host Town Initiative programmes, the Tokyo Games will enable new partnerships and relationships between people and athletes from all countries. The guiding principle "Be better, together — for the planet and the people", set by the Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, is a strong signal of openness, encounter, exchange and conviviality that will extend far beyond the Olympic Village.

In many ways, the legacy of the Games is not limited to the context of sports. Let us consider, for

example, the message of hope conveyed by the parade of athletes from the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea under a single flag at Pyeongchang, and the message of unity conveyed by the team of refugees. We also welcome the strategic road map of the International Olympic Committee's Olympic Agenda 2020, which guided that progress. The Committee has also taken steps to make the bidding process and the Games more sustainable so that, in the long term, the host cities can benefit from the Games' momentum, particularly with regard to infrastructure, to the future benefit of residents and users alike.

We encourage the International Olympic Committee to continue its work aimed at promoting the role of sport and public policy. That undertaking is also in keeping with our own objectives as States Members of the United Nations, and the actions of the Olympic Committee and the United Nations to that end are mutually reinforcing. Through its partnerships and long-standing commitment to sport for development and peace, as well as in the field of gender equality and the fight against all forms of discrimination, the Committee is a key player.

While the contribution of sport to a better world and sustainable development was recognized back in 1993 through the inclusion of an item on the agenda of the General Assembly, its alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development could be further developed. The Kazan Action Plan is also key for guiding our Governments. Gender equality, integration, education, social inclusion, professional integration and the promotion of healthy lifestyles — there is no area where sport is not a critical tool.

In the field of peace and security, sport is also a relevant tool for reconciliation and the prevention of violent extremism. Through its convening power and its promotion of respect, mutual understanding and its prohibition of all discrimination, sport offers platforms for exchange to individuals and communities that would otherwise have no contact with one another. In addition, the security of world sporting events, particularly the Olympic Games, is one of the main challenges that all organizers must take into account, and we thank them for that.

The Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, which I have the pleasure of co-chairing with Ambassador Al-Thani of Qatar, has preserved its role and its meeting places with the ever-growing

number of representatives of friendly countries, as well as with the participation of the Division for Inclusive Social Development, which is the focal point within the Secretariat, and the United Nations Department of Global Communications, because we must reach out and help to raise awareness through sports what the United Nations does for all the people of the world.

Over the course of the year, the contribution of sports has been pointed out by my delegation on the margins of the meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council, such as the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, and those of treaty bodies like the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. For example, the role that world-renowned sports entities can play is illustrated by the big football clubs with foundations and strong identities. They support programmes for thousands of young people, who learn values that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Sport is also a vehicle for raising awareness of major issues in our societies, such as the difficulties faced by female athletes, even at the professional level, and the wage and award gaps that continue to be far too large in many sports and competitions. These issues were discussed with the Football Club des Girondins de Bordeaux team and its president, who shared their experiences with Member States.

Aware that sport, like Olympism, is a mindset and a philosophy of life, this year we once again organized, under the leadership of Dr. Jordan Metzl of the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, who is also an author and triathlete, two Ironstrengths at the United Nations. That friendly sport is a venue for New Yorkers to meet people from the Member States and enables participants to become familiar with the role of sport for development and peace and in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In addition, in an ongoing effort to reach out to young people in New York City, two sporting events provided dozens of young New Yorkers with unique opportunities to access the United Nations, to learn about the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and to play basketball on United Nations grounds.

Under the impetus of His Serene Highness Prince Albert II, member of the International Olympic Committee since 1985 and President of the Monégasque Olympic Committee, sport and its contribution to

sustainable development is one of the priorities of the Principality of Monaco. From primary school children to adults, Monaco offers all its citizens and residents high-quality sports facilities that enable their regular participation in the Summer, Winter and Youth Olympic Games in a spirit of fraternity with the entire Olympic family.

May the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games be crowned with success and may all of its athletes bring to life the Olympic spirit and ideal.

**Mr. Ang** (Singapore): My delegation would like to express its appreciation to Japan for its work on draft resolution A/74/L.18, entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”. Singapore is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution and we wish Japan every success in hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020.

Sport is a phenomenon that brings both tangible and unseen benefits to societies. Sport has the unique ability to bring diverse people and communities together. We celebrate our sporting heroes as a nation. We take part in sporting activities with family, friends, colleagues and strangers, deepening our bonds in the process. Through sport, we teach our children values, such as caring for others in society. Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development and is recognized for its contribution to development and peace, promotion of tolerance and respect, and empowerment of individuals and communities.

Sport is an important part of Singapore’s nation-building and national identity. In 2012, we launched Vision 2030, Singapore’s national sports blueprint, which empowers Singaporeans to live better through sport. Vision 2030 envisages sport as a driving force for positive change by strengthening individuals, communities and the nation through a lifetime of sporting opportunities. Today, we are witnessing the positive impact of that initiative. There has been an increase in overall physical activity levels across different age segments, as well as in the percentage of Singaporeans who view sport as an activity that promotes social cohesion.

In Singapore, sport plays a key role in bringing together Singaporeans of different social and educational backgrounds, ethnicities and religions. Under Vision 2030, the Sports Facilities Master Plan guides our development of community nodes and innovative spaces to serve sporting needs at the

national, regional, town and neighbourhood levels, so that the majority of Singaporeans have access to public sports and recreational facilities within walking distance from their homes. We have also established ActiveSG as the national movement for sport and physical activity, integrating and activating spaces, programmes and partnerships to create sporting opportunities for all. There are now more than 1.85 million ActiveSG members and more than 10,000 ActiveSG programmes for children, adults, seniors and persons with disabilities, which create opportunities for them to exercise and play together.

We strongly believe in sport without boundaries — that sport should be inclusive, affordable, and easily accessible, regardless of age, ability, gender or social status. The SportCares initiative was launched in 2012 as a force for social good to engage at-risk youth and mitigate youth delinquency. Programmes such as Saturday Night Lights provide a platform for at-risk youth to play football and receive formal football training while learning life skills and values. That initiative has since grown to include programmes for seniors and persons with disabilities and special needs. Our national sport volunteer movement, Team Nila, also creates opportunities to bring different segments of the community together to give back to society through a common passion for sport. Team Nila volunteers have contributed to the success of many sporting events hosted by Singapore, such as the 28th Southeast Asian Games.

At the regional and international levels, sport transcends national boundaries and plays an important role in bringing people together and building bridges and understanding among societies. As we speak, more than 5,000 athletes are competing in 56 sports in the 30th Southeast Asian Games, in the Philippines, in a spirit of friendly competition that reflects and reaffirms the close ties of friendship, community and family among the peoples and countries of our region.

Singapore renews its call to harness and recognize the value of sport with a view to building a more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous future for our peoples.

**Mrs. Theofili** (Greece): Dating back to the eighth century B.C., the ancient Olympic Games were a force for peace and solidarity among ancient Greek city-States that could declare a truce for a period of seven days before the beginning and after the end of the



Games. The ultimate goal was the peaceful conduct of the Games, which was ensured by protecting the city from invasion and by ordering the people and State authorities to refrain from interfering with the safe passage of the athletes. As Thucydides claimed, when States violated the truce, their athletes were banned from participating in the games.

The concept of the Olympic truce was born in the age of antiquity and was maintained for a period of 1,200 years. The Greeks viewed the Games as an opportunity to replace conflict with friendly competition. However, the ideal of the Olympic Truce was also of great importance for the revival of the Olympic Games in the modern era as an invaluable tool to advance international cooperation and promote world peace.

In today's world, an emphasis on Olympic peace has become a major feature of modern Olympic ideology. The foundation of the International Olympic Truce Centre, for the creation of which Greece actively engaged with the International Olympic Committee, gave the pursuit of peace a new dynamism. Most importantly, the inclusion of the Olympic Truce in the United Nations framework through the adoption of relevant resolutions granted a distinct role to the ideal. We should bear in mind that in a world of differences, inequalities and conflicts, agreement on even a temporary truce is an achievement for the international community. Therefore, it is our responsibility to continue to promote the Olympic Truce and spare no effort to ensure its actual implementation.

In 2020, Japan will host the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games. I take this opportunity to wish Japan every success in that demanding endeavour. For the rest of us, it is our task to fulfil our responsibilities by observing the Olympic Truce and thereby making peace an attainable goal. We should all find inspiration in next year's Olympic Games and reflect on how sports could be used as a useful tool to reduce tensions and build bridges.

**Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation supports the adoption of draft resolution A/74/L.18 on building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal, as it represents a call for justice by all Member States. China wishes the XXXII Tokyo Summer Olympic Games every success. We also welcome the participation of Mr. Bach, President of the International Olympic

Committee and the delegation of Japan in today's meeting. As a co-sponsor of the draft resolution on the Olympic Truce, China urges all Member States to act in accordance with the provisions of the draft resolution by striving to bridge differences, resolve disputes and end the use of all military force and hostilities during the Olympic Games.

Sport is an important factor in social development and human progress. The Olympic spirit is the common aspiration of peoples around the world, as it promotes unity, friendship, peace, exchanges among countries and the integration of civilizations, as well as their harmonious coexistence. The Olympic Games are not only an arena for athletes but also a bridge of friendship for people of all countries. The modern Olympic Games bring together people of different countries, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, enhance mutual understanding and promote social cohesion, while significantly contributing to world peace and development.

Throughout the world, the international community faces multiple challenges. Unilateralism, protectionism and bullying behaviour have severely undermined multilateralism, disrupted the international rule of law, brought about unnecessary confrontation and weakened mutual trust, friendship and cooperation among peoples of all countries. Many experts are concerned that the world will witness a schism. The international community is at a crossroads. Do we want multilateralism or unilateralism, unity or division, cooperation or confrontation and progress or regression? China's approach towards such key issues is very clear. We stand firmly by multilateralism and the vast majority of United Nations Members, support fairness and justice in line with the current reality and advocate a mutually beneficial world and a common future. China will always promote world peace, contribute to global development, defend the international order and work towards building a community of a shared future for humankind.

In 2022, Beijing will host the XXIV Winter Olympic Games, which marks the return of the Winter Olympic Games to a city that successfully hosted the XXIX Summer Olympic Games. China will work closely with the International Olympic Committee to present a successful, exceptional and excellent Olympic Games to the world, which will promote the development of the Olympic Games and winter sports and fully bring

into play the positive role of sports in achieving world peace, development and people-to-people exchanges.

We will hold a green Olympic Games and prioritize ecological considerations, resource conservation and environmental friendliness by developing and implementing a low-carbon workplan, whereby renewable energy will be used at all winter Olympic venues to strive for carbon neutrality. We will advocate the principles of broad participation, joint contributions and benefit-sharing by actively mobilizing all sectors of society in preparing for the Games and accelerating the development and promotion of winter sports. We will put the people at the centre so as to benefit them and allow women, children and persons with disabilities more opportunities to take part in sports activities.

We will continue to promote openness at the Olympic Games through the Beijing Winter Olympic Games. We will strengthen sports cooperation and people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world. China will create a new window for promoting the Olympic spirit, exchanges among civilizations and mutual understanding. We will combat corruption and uphold integrity in hosting the Olympic Games, strengthen oversight of the preparations and adopt a zero-tolerance approach towards doping so that the Beijing Winter Olympic Games is as clean and pure as ice and snow. We welcome Member States to the Beijing Winter Olympic Games in February 2022.

**Ms. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba)** (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the President for convening this plenary debate under agenda item 11, entitled “Sport for development and peace: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, during which draft resolution A/74/L.18, co-sponsored by our delegation, has been introduced. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the delegation of Japan for presenting the draft resolution and for its efforts during the negotiations. The consideration of this issue within the United Nations supports its value as a determining factor for development and peace.

We reaffirm that, as established by UNESCO, the pursuit of physical activity and sport is a fundamental right for all, contributing to the complete and harmonious development of human beings. We must ensure that mechanisms and institutions for the exercise of that right exist and properly function, without discrimination or limitations. In that regard, although progress has been made at the international

level, much remains to be done to systematically ensure and guarantee the exercise of that right by children, women, the elderly and people with disabilities. In that context, we must also ensure that technology does not supplant the benefits of social interaction and that urban infrastructure meets the demands and needs of those groups for their advancement, without barriers or obstacles. Moreover, we must work to change the perception of sport as just another chore or a mere hobby for some people. Sport and physical education must be part and parcel of our culture of life and an intrinsic component of our daily activities.

Through the triumph of the Cuban Revolution on 1 January 1959, sport became a right enjoyed by all Cubans, to the benefit of their quality of life. Its widespread practice from that time to the present day is one of the major achievements of our Revolution, with Commander Fidel Castro Ruz at its helm. With a view to turning that principle into a reality, the practice of sport in Cuba became a constitutional right. The Cuban Constitution, which was recently approved by the National Assembly of People’s Power and ratified by a popular referendum held on 24 February, states that “people have the right to physical education, sports and recreation as essential elements of their quality of life”.

The national education system guarantees the teaching and practice of physical education and sport as part of the overall education of children, adolescents and youth. The State ensures the conditions that guarantee that the necessary resources are devoted to promoting and practicing sport and recreation for the Cuban people and to preparing, nurturing and developing sports talents. The institutionalization of sport in Cuba led to the establishment of the National Institute of Sport, Physical Education and Recreation — the governing body of the Cuban sports movement — which runs our specialized educational centres and sports facilities.

We prioritize the training of high-performance athletes and guarantee the quality of their sports careers. The Cuban people are proud of all the athletes who, through their sacrifice and dedication, have raised our small island so high. Our promotion of a culture of physical activity and the quality of the training of athletes are internationally recognized. In that regard, Cuba has shared its best practices and experience in response to requests for cooperation from numerous developing countries.

We reiterate our condemnation of any attempt to politicize sport or to steal talented athletes, especially those from developing countries. That negative practice must stop. Sport must be seen as a bridge for peace and an avenue to promote development and understanding.

**Mr. Mavroyiannis** (Cyprus): I fully subscribe to the statement of the European Union, and I wish to make some additional remarks because of my country's strong links to the Olympic ideal, formed through Cyprus' participation in the Olympic Games since their initiation in antiquity.

I would like to thank Japan for submitting this year's draft resolution on the Olympic ideal (A/74/L.18) and wish it every success in organizing the next Olympiad. I welcome the presence of the President of the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, Mr. Yoshiro Mori. I also wish to express appreciation to the President of the International Olympic Committee, Mr. Thomas Bach, for his presence here today and his work to promote the ideals for which the Olympic Games stand.

If the Olympic ideals were upheld, things would be much easier for us here at the United Nations. The creation of a peaceful environment, in the hope that this would have implications more lasting than the duration of the Games themselves, was always consubstantial to the Olympic ideal. The sacred tradition of the Olympic Truce — the cessation of hostilities before, during and after the Games to ensure the safe passage of athletes — was underpinned by three morals: the futility of war, the denunciation of violence and the subjugation and the superiority of pursuits that bring people together; the quest for freedom, shared values, the intrinsically noble character of fairness and synergy; and the recognition of their contribution to the prosperity of all and to the further development of culture and civilization.

Sport has a unique capacity to bring people together. It is also the most powerful tool to build ethos among our young people. Creating a culture of sportsmanship, fair play, hard work and personal sacrifice in pursuit of a goal — dignified rivalry, relishing victory and accepting defeat — can go further than any knowledge-based education. If we managed to build that values-based culture at the individual, community and national levels, the mission of the United Nations to bring peace, development, respect for rules, respect for rights and freedoms, equality, solidarity, tolerance and

non-discrimination, social inclusion, health and many others, would be made much more feasible.

Cyprus remains committed to the endeavour of promoting peace by bringing to the forefront the virtues of humanity that prove we were created for something more noble than conflict, and striving for the prevalence of culture, peace and security as the core instincts of human civilization.

**Mr. Ke** (Cambodia): The importance of sport in society is undeniable. Sporting activities bring people together, foster understanding and tolerance among the participants and promote the important values of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. Sporting activities serve as an avenue of entertainment and recreation and bring a valuable educational dimension. To young children, sport serves as a powerful learning tool, reinforcing the values of hard work, respect and equality.

Sport and the Olympic ideals contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through mutual understanding, the spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play. In that light, the social value of sport is unquestionable. A spectrum of the Sustainable Development Goals further acknowledges the important role sport plays in the promotion of health, education and the advancement of peaceful societies. Sport contributes to improving the health and fitness of society by involving people in physical activity. It instils healthy lifestyle choices among young people and strengthens societal welfare into the future.

Sport plays an important part in children's development, opening children to the value of cooperation, teamwork and tolerance. Developing those skills at an early age will aid children immensely in their professional futures. Furthermore, sport encourages balanced participation, promotes the self-confidence of children and addresses gender issues.

Sport is an important enabler of peace to strengthen friendly relations among nations, people and communities, regardless of cultural differences and political viewpoints. In that context, Cambodia will proudly host the 2023 Southeast Asian Games and is confident that they will promote friendly relations among the participating States and beyond.

In conclusion, Cambodia is pleased to join other Member States in co-sponsoring draft resolution A/74/L.18, which was introduced by the President of

the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games. The Royal Government of Cambodia will continue to promote sport to advance its contributions to global peace and development.

**Mr. Wax** (Israel): Sport is a universal language centred around people, to which participants and spectators alike learn to celebrate excellence and discover the idea of sportsmanship — the idea that one must try one's hardest from start to finish and be graceful and respectful towards one's opponent, no matter who wins or loses and regardless of the background, religion, gender or nationality of the opponent.

We are proud to have co-sponsored the important draft resolution A/74/L.18, which encompasses many ideals that are paramount to achieving peace and a healthy global society. That is one of the most important contributions of sport. Israel is host to numerous programmes aimed at enabling and encouraging all members of its diverse society to take part in sporting activities.

Organizations like Budo For Peace use traditional martial arts to teach the behavioural values of tolerance, mutual respect and harmony to youth from Arab, Jewish and Christian communities. The Israel Sports Center for the Disabled works with athletes with disabilities from all backgrounds in a variety of sports. Most recently, the Alliance for Middle East Peace was nominated as one of eight international finalists for the prestigious Prince Albert II of Monaco's Peace and Sport Award, for the Athletes for Peace event that it hosted earlier this year. That event brought together 400 Jewish, Arab, Bedouin, ultra-Orthodox, immigrants, refugees and special-needs participants to celebrate the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace.

Professional athletes are often idolized by their fans. Their achievements on the field inspire millions and their conduct, both on and off the field, influences the behaviour and perceptions of many people. When fans see their role models embracing diversity on the field and respecting their opponents, that goes a long way towards promoting diversity in society. However, when role models act in an ungracious or hostile manner, that has the opposite effect.

When athletes are excluded from sporting events, that negates the essence of sportsmanship. As enshrined so well in the Olympic Truce, politics have no place in the world of sports. It is up to all who believe in peace and equality to ensure that international sporting

competitions are open to everyone. We must not turn a blind eye to those who insist on politicizing sports events, and the Olympics in particular.

Unfortunately, as we have seen again over the past year, Iran still refuses to allow its athletes to compete against Israeli opponents, forcing its own athletes to shamefully forfeit or lose in competitions to avoid the possibility of competing as required. I say "force" as, despite Iran's claims to the contrary, the whole world witnessed only a few months ago at the World Judo Championships in Tokyo how disgraceful and heartbreaking it can be for those athletes who spend their lifetimes practicing and preparing to compete only to be bullied by their own country, which refuses to let them fulfil their dreams and potential when they are so close to achieving their ultimate goal.

As stated in the draft resolution before us, sport can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding among people and nations. If States Members of the United Nations and international sporting bodies, such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), strive to promote peace and understanding through sport, surely they cannot tolerate such behaviour, which, as the IOC has stated in the past, is contrary to the rules of fair play and against the spirit of friendship embodied in the Olympic values.

We encourage all Member States, and particularly the sponsors of the draft resolution, to not simply adopt the draft resolution in theory, but to try to fulfil its intent. We therefore support the International Judo Federation for its recent decision to stand up against discrimination and finally suspend Iran from all competitions for its ongoing refusal to allow its athletes to compete against their Israeli counterparts. We also support the International Paralympic Committee for stripping Malaysia of the right to host the 2019 World Para Swimming Championships, after it disgracefully refused to let Israeli athletes compete.

We believe that other international sporting bodies should also work to stop such behaviour, which is in direct contrast to the draft resolution that we are discussing today and a blatant violation of the Olympic Charter and IOC code of ethics. It is hard to believe that in this day and age, Member States still strive to host international sporting events, while not permitting the participation of all athletes.

The Olympics is one of the most remarkable global events. Through sports, we can promote peace

and development as we run, swim and jump towards the future. We wish Japan the best of luck in hosting the upcoming 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which will without a doubt inspire millions around the world. As an enthusiastic fan of the Olympic Games and the Olympic ideals, I look forward to the Games, hopeful that sports will be the winner, promoting peace and dialogue among all nations, and not boycotts and politics.

**Mr. Amayo (Kenya):** At the outset, I thank the President of the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games for having introduced the timely draft resolution A/74/L.18, entitled “Sport for development and peace: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, which we are proud to co-sponsor.

We recognize the valuable contribution of sport to promoting education, sustainable development, peace, cooperation, social inclusion and health at the local, regional and international levels and take note that, as declared in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, sport can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding among peoples and nations. Kenya takes pride in being part of the wider Olympic family and is globally regarded as a sporting nation due to our patriotic and gallant athletes, whose exploits have defined Kenya’s lasting sporting brand.

We note that the General Assembly, in resolution 73/24 of 3 December 2018, on sport as an enabler of sustainable development, called upon future hosts of the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games to include sport, as appropriate, in conflict prevention activities and to ensure the effective implementation of the Olympic Truce during the Games. It is expected that the Tokyo 2020 Games will be a useful opportunity to harness the power of sport to advance the world by fostering an atmosphere of peace, development, resilience, tolerance and understanding.

Kenya has prioritized the promotion of sports by enacting the Sports Act 2013, with the purpose of harnessing sports for development, encouraging and promoting drug-free sports and recreation, establishing sport institutions and providing for the administration and management of sport and sport facilities countrywide.

To promote the Paralympic Games in the country, Kenya — which has at least 1.2 million people with physical challenges — assists many by enrolling them in Special Olympics programmes, essentially because

sport helps in developing their psychomotor, cognitive, physical and social skills. The active involvement of persons with disabilities in sport and the Paralympic Games contributes to the full and equal realization of their human rights, as well as respect for their inherent dignity.

In the pastoral areas of the country, Kenya has encouraged sports as a means of fostering peace among neighbours. In recognizing that sports can deter radicalization, prevent violent extremism and prevent violence in general, we therefore welcome the designation of 6 April as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace.

In conclusion, Kenya reiterates that the promotion of sport for development and peace needs all our support, commends the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee for their noble tasks and, finally, wishes Japan success in hosting the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

**The Acting President:** In accordance with resolution 64/3, of 19 October 2009, I now call on the observer of the International Olympic Committee.

**Mr. Bach (International Olympic Committee):** Allow me to thank you, Sir, for the great honour to address the General Assembly today. My thanks and gratitude also go to the Government of Japan, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, for submitting draft resolution A/74/L.18, on building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal.

On behalf of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), I would like to particularly thank the representatives of Monaco and Qatar, co-chairs of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, as well as the many Member States that have sponsored the draft resolution.

As a permanent observer to the United Nations, the IOC has closely accompanied that process. It is indeed encouraging to see the wide-level support from Member States for the draft resolution. When our founder Pierre de Coubertin revived the Olympic Games exactly 125 years ago, he saw it as a way to promote peace among all nations and people. On our 125th anniversary year, the draft resolution for adoption today demonstrates clearly that his vision endures. The draft resolution is a powerful reminder of the shared values on which both the United Nations and the IOC are built.

As the United Nations looks ahead to its seventy-fifth anniversary next year, what better time could there be than this Olympic Year 2020 to celebrate our shared values? As Secretary-General António Guterres eloquently declared, “If there is a true symbol of peace in our world, it is the Olympic spirit”. With the adoption of the Olympic Truce draft resolution today, the Assembly is supporting the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games as that true symbol of peace in our world.

Today is therefore a welcome opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the IOC to our shared values of peace, solidarity and respect. Both of our organizations are guided by universality, equality, non-discrimination and the rule of law. The alignment of our common values and principles is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the SDGs, the United Nations specifically highlights sport as an important enabler to achieve, in particular, peace, health, education and the empowerment of women.

Our commitment to sustainability is reflected in our comprehensive Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms. In fact, we have made sustainability a central element of all our activities. We walk the talk. That is true for the Olympic House — our new IOC headquarters building — which is the most sustainable building in the world in its category. It is also true for the way the Olympic Games will be run in the future.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games will be the most prominent expression of the IOC’s commitment to our shared values, and the SDGs in particular. Thanks to the Olympic Agenda 2020, we will achieve gender balance at the Olympic Games for the first time in Tokyo, with the highest number of female athletes ever in history, at about 49 per cent, which sends a strong message of gender equality to the world.

In the spirit of our reforms, our friends from the Tokyo Organising Committee of the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, under the great leadership of its President, His Excellency Mr. Yoshiro Mori, are promoting sustainability in an outstanding way. Tokyo aims for carbon-neutral games. From the Olympic medals made from recycled electronics, to powering the Olympic Games with renewable energy or using zero-emission vehicles, among many other actions, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games will be an inspiration for sustainable development and inclusion, also with regard to the Paralympic Games. That is why I would like to particularly express my gratitude to President Mori

for his unwavering personal dedication to our values and principles. The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games will be followed by far more than half of the world’s entire population. Billions of people will see the greatest sporting event on our planet.

The athletes from each and every one of the countries represented here will inspire the world. They will inspire and unite their peoples. They will bring pride and joy to everyone. It is their sporting performance, effort, excellence, emotions, joy and tears that create the magic of the Olympic Games. At the same time, I can say from my own experience as an Olympic champion, participating in the Olympic Games makes one humble because one becomes part of something bigger — part of an event that unites the world, an experience that promotes the shared values of all humankind and a truly global community.

At the Olympic Games, there is no discrimination. At the Olympic Games, everyone is equal. At the Olympic Games, everyone respects the same rules. The Olympic Games are the only event today that brings the entire world together in peaceful competition.

In Tokyo, the world will see united athletes from all 206 national Olympic committees and from the IOC Refugee Olympic Team. While those 11,000 best athletes of the world are competitors in sport, they will also be living peacefully together under one roof in the Olympic Village. That is the Olympic message of peace to all of humankind. Our gracious Japanese friends and hosts will interpret that mission of the Olympic Games in an excellent way.

We can we achieve that universality only if we enable everyone to participate. To that end, we need solidarity. That is why the IOC distributes 90 per cent of all its revenues for the benefit of the athletes and the development of sport and Paralympic sport around the globe. In hard figures, that means that we spend \$5 billion over the four years of one Olympiad. Each and every one of the national Olympic committees benefits from that support. But no one need worry — not a single cent of taxpayers’ money is in the IOC budget.

Another illustration of that solidarity is the IOC Refugee Olympic Team. Exactly four years ago in this very Hall, I announced the creation of the Refugee Olympic Team (see A/70/PV.39). Those refugee athletes then competed on an equal basis with all the other athletes at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games. Standing here again four years later, I wish I

could announce that we no longer need an IOC Refugee Olympic Team. But unfortunately, the reasons for which we created that team persist. That is why we will once again have an IOC Refugee Olympic Team for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Our aim in that regard is to send a strong message of hope to all refugees and, at the same time, also raise awareness across the world about the global refugee crisis.

In order to achieve that global solidarity and true universality, the IOC and the Olympic Games must be politically neutral. We can accomplish our mission to unite the world only if the Olympic Games stand above and beyond any and all political differences. Our political neutrality goes hand in hand with the autonomy of sport. We can be neutral only if we are autonomous. With that autonomy, we can ensure the worldwide equal application of the rules and laws of sport. Starting with its adoption in 2014 of the historic resolution 69/6, the General Assembly has recognized and supported that autonomy that is so central to our mission. That is why I am grateful to be able to personally ask the Assembly for its continued support for the autonomy of sport and the political neutrality of the IOC and the Olympic Games.

In our fragile world, we see our shared values and principles challenged in many ways, not only in the international community but also in sport. In sport, we can see an increasing erosion of respect for the global rule of law. Some believe that the rule of law does not apply to them or even want to impose their own laws on others. Solidarity is under threat, while mistrust and self-interest are on the rise.

Some want to devalue the Olympic Games to a purely profit-driven business model. To them we say that we are a values-based organization. For the IOC, money is not an end in itself. For the IOC, money is just a means to achieve our mission of uniting the world in peace and solidarity. Universality is threatened when our political neutrality is not respected. Our political neutrality is undermined whenever organizations or individuals attempt to use the Olympic Games as a platform for their own agendas, howsoever legitimate they may be. The Olympic Games are a sport celebration of our shared humanity. They are not and must never be a platform for advancing political or any other potentially divisive ends. The IOC is fully committed to preserving and strengthening these values and principles of respect for the rule of law, solidarity and political neutrality.

But our commitment is not enough. We depend on the support of Governments to ensure our mission and neutrality. That is why we are so grateful for the Assembly's support for this Olympic truce draft resolution. In supporting this draft resolution, the Assembly is also supporting the values and principles that unite us. We urge everyone to take those values and principles into account when taking decisions that affect sport. In this Olympic spirit of universality, solidarity and peace, I invite everyone to join hands and celebrate our unity in all our diversity at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games and beyond. Let us demonstrate together that our shared humanity is stronger than the forces that seek to divide us.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/74/L.18, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/74/L.18, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, the Comoros, the Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, France, Gabon, the Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, the Netherlands, the Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Oman, Pakistan, Papua

New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, the Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to commend the very large number of Member States that co-sponsored draft resolution A/74/L.18. I would also like to thank the Japanese delegation, which drew up the list of sponsors and prepared the draft resolution in a way that united all Member States.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/74/L.18?

*Draft resolution A/74/L.18 was adopted (resolution 74/16).*

**The Acting President**: It is a great pleasure for me to thank His Excellency Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro, President of the Tokyo Organizing Committee for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, for his presence and for introducing resolution 74/16. It has been a great honour for us to listen to his presentation of the resolution. I wish the Prime Minister a safe trip home.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who has requested to exercise the right of reply.

**Mr. Mamdouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): As usual, today the representative of the Israeli regime made unfounded claims that are contrary to the situation on the ground. These allegations are used as a tool to divert attention from the brutalities of the regime against the Palestinians. Indeed, it is very ironic that a regime that is well known for its atrocities and apartheid policies, which are well documented by the various United Nations organs and agencies, talks about its non-discriminatory policy on sport. Representatives of the Israeli regime would do better not to speak about its inclusive approach towards sport while discrimination against Palestinians is a characteristic

of this apartheid regime, with its shameful 72-year history, which can be summed up in merely a few words — occupation, brutality, massacre and flagrant violation of human rights.

As long as the most basic rights of the innocent Palestinian people are grossly violated on a daily basis, how can we expect this regime to provide opportunities for Palestinians under its illegal sovereignty to be involved in a sports event? It goes without saying that the Israeli regime has a long history of following an opportunistic policy to mislead others and divert attention from its inhuman and savage actions against innocent Palestinians and other nations in the Middle East.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 11.

### Item 31

#### Prevention of armed conflict

##### (a) Prevention of armed conflict

##### Draft resolution (A/74/L.12 /Rev.1)

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

**Mr. Yelchenko** (Ukraine): Draft resolution A/74/L.12.Rev.1, which I have the honour to introduce today under sub-item (a) of agenda item 31, entitled “Prevention of armed conflict”, focuses on a pressing legal and political issue, the problem of the militarization of the occupied territory of Ukraine, in particular the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. The draft addresses a matter of fundamental concern to my country and, I believe, to the United Nations membership at large.

Since February 2014, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol have been occupied by the Russian Federation. The attempt to annex that sovereign Ukrainian territory was not recognized by the international community, as evidenced by resolution 68/262, on the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Since the Russian Federation’s occupation of Crimea, there has been no respite in the progressive militarization of the Crimean peninsula. Specifically, it involves destabilizing transfers of weapon systems by Russia to the territory of Ukraine that include nuclear-



capable aircraft and missiles, weapons, ammunition and military personnel.

The occupation and subsequent militarization of Crimea have led to the expansion of the area in which Russian warships and military aircraft are being used in the Black Sea region and as far as the entire Mediterranean basin. That activity therefore has far-reaching consequences for security not only in the Black Sea area but in the whole of Southern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The multiple military exercises that are conducted by the Russian armed forces in and around Crimea reflect Russia's aggressive policies towards Ukraine and other Black Sea littoral States. Such exercises also portend considerable long-term negative consequences for the environment in the region.

The Russian Federation is also actively militarizing the Sea of Azov by increasing the number of warships and expanding its presence throughout the Sea of Azov. The progressive militarization of the Sea of Azov not only has implications for maritime trade and supplies into Ukraine but poses an additional military threat to Ukraine and is contributing to a deterioration in the security situation in the region. The illegal construction of a bridge across the Kerch Strait between Russia and temporarily occupied Crimea has been a substantial contribution to that threat, in particular by facilitating the further militarization of Crimea and the presence of additional Russian maritime and other forces in the area on the pretext of protecting the bridge and its infrastructure.

The unlawful action taken by the Russian Federation in the Black Sea on 25 November 2018, when three Ukrainian vessels were barred from entering the Sea of Azov via the Kerch Strait and subsequently attacked and captured by Russian ships on the pretext that they were violating Russian borders, are yet more proof of the urgency of the problem of the militarization of Crimea and parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. We took positive note of the Russian Federation's release of 24 personnel and their vessels. Regrettably, however, the vessels themselves were returned in unusable condition, without weapons, documents or parts of their equipment, including sensitive communication systems.

I have already stressed that as the Russian Federation continues its militarization of the occupied Crimean peninsula and the maritime area around it, the

security situation in the region continues to deteriorate. What is more alarming is that the occupying Power is taking steps to nuclearize Crimea, specifically by deploying carriers and other means capable of delivering nuclear weapons, and by actively developing nuclear infrastructure on the peninsula. Taking into account Crimea's strategic location in the region and the fact that Ukraine is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State, the Russian Federation's deployment of nuclear forces in Crimea constitutes a serious challenge to the existing non-proliferation regime and should be met with an appropriate response by the international community.

On the broader international scale, Russia's advances in its hybrid war against Ukraine, if not resolutely addressed and reversed, could invite aggressive ventures on the part of other, hitherto hesitant actors and open a Pandora's box in other parts of the world. By tackling this threat, therefore, each and every State Member of the United Nations will be contributing to its own peace and security.

Given the current volatile security situation in the areas mentioned and its potentially far-reaching negative implications, Ukraine, together with a group of 23 States, has submitted an updated draft resolution entitled "Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov". As the Assembly can see, the number of sponsors has increased to 42. We are very grateful for this strong solidarity and support, and I believe we are now speaking on behalf of all the sponsors of the draft resolution and the wider United Nations membership. The main goals of the draft resolution are to urge the Russian Federation to withdraw its military forces from Crimea and to stop the illegal occupation of Ukraine's territory, as well as to ensure that Russia halts its harassment of commercial vessels and restrictions on international shipping in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

By bringing the issue of the militarization of Crimea before the General Assembly, Ukraine and the draft resolution's other sponsors are not seeking confrontation or politicization. Rather, we want to emphasize that it is of the utmost importance that every Member State fully support the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. I hope that the draft resolution will enjoy the same support and constructive attitude from Member States

as have other General Assembly resolutions on Ukraine. I urge all Member States to vote in favour, which would be a clear demonstration of their strong commitment to the principles of international law and the Charter.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/74/L.12/Rev.1.

Before giving the floor for explanations of vote or position before the voting, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The draft resolutions that the General Assembly adopts generally fall into three groups. The first group is consensus draft resolutions. Work is done on them, positions are agreed on and Member States often reach difficult compromises, because they understand the power of the message that such collective decisions send. Fortunately, that is how a majority are adopted.

The second is draft resolutions that individual Member States are unable to support, for one reason or another. As a rule, these scenarios are also the result of painstaking, expert efforts. We in the General Assembly try to avoid such results, since the non-consensus nature of such resolutions makes their implementation significantly less effective.

Lastly, there is the third and smallest group of draft resolutions, which are introduced for political reasons and have no relationship to reality. As a rule they are supported by about a third of Member States on a basis of bloc discipline, while a majority of delegations either abstain or do not participate in the voting, thereby demonstrating their true attitude to such initiatives. They do not usually even involve expert consultations, since the task of reaching a consensus or obtaining a majority of votes is not the point for the State introducing the draft resolution. Their distinctive feature is that after their adoption, their authors, in defiance of arithmetic and common sense, immediately begin proclaiming the alleged significant support of the international community. Of course, there can be no doubt as to the defects of such arguments.

Today we are dealing with a clear example of the third type. It is hard to understand what the aims of the authors of draft resolution A/74/L.12/Rev.1 are in making us waste our time for a second consecutive year by considering a politicized, provocative text based

on conjecture, speculation and distorted facts. The Crimeans made their choice long ago. Under the threat of a bloody massacre from the nationalists who came to power in 2014, they reunited with Russia. History has shown how right and prescient that decision was. The residents of Donbas who merely asked that Kyiv consider their concerns about the new Government policies were attacked with bombs, shells and bullets. The resulting ongoing internal conflict in Ukraine has killed, wounded or maimed thousands of people and left millions refugees or internally displaced. According to various estimates, between 3 million and 4 million Ukrainians have settled or been forced to earn their living in Russia alone. The Maidan authorities and their Western sponsors are still trying to hide this entire national tragedy under the guise of a mythical Russian aggression.

This draft resolution is based on blatant lies and assertions that things in Crimea are terrible and on claims that Crimeans are languishing under Russia's annexation and occupation. It is revealing that in order to ensure that no one can see the absurdity of this Maidan propaganda for themselves, one of the draft resolution's paragraphs calls on Member States to refrain from visiting Russian Crimea. That is a very far-sighted step by the authors, since anyone who does visit Crimea comes away with diametrically different views and conclusions that bring down the entire premise of the draft resolution like a house of cards. It is sufficient to ask this year's record number of 7 million tourist visitors to the peninsula, 1 million of whom came from Ukraine, about their impressions. They are not hiding their opinions and are expressing them both in interviews and through social media.

One would actually prefer not to dwell on the canards that the Ukrainian draft resolution contains — lies upon lies and untruths upon untruths. Even its title contains a lie. The problem of the militarization of Crimea does not exist. For members' information, in accordance with agreements between Russia and Ukraine before 2014, our country had the right to deploy up to 25,000 military personnel on the peninsula. In reality, there were only 12,000 of them, versus 15,000 Ukrainians. There are even fewer of them today, and we are publicly informing the international community about that.

Right now I feel genuinely uncomfortable about the fact that my colleagues in this Hall are once again being dragged by the Ukrainian Permanent Mission into a politicized, provocative propaganda

spectacle that nobody needs. I refer specifically to the Permanent Mission of Ukraine because we honestly do not understand Ukraine's true position. It so happens that a meeting of the Normandy quartet is taking place in Paris this very day, ahead of which our Ukrainian colleagues have done everything they can in words and deeds to create a favourable backdrop. The adoption of the draft resolution today was intended to hinder the constructive course of that meeting. The fact is that its authors have done their best to pull out of the closet all the skeletons that the Ukrainian electorate had firmly decided to lay to rest through their convincing vote for President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his party.

Incidentally, as preparations were being made for the Paris meeting, we and everyone else involved heard much that was positive and encouraging from the President of Ukraine himself. And in any case, what he said is entirely incompatible with the spin that the delegation of Ukraine is now proposing for the Assembly's consideration. Ultimately, it is difficult to avoid asking oneself whose orders our Ukrainian colleagues are following. Are they those of the Ukrainian people, who firmly support a rapprochement with Russia and internal peace in their country, or of the party of war, who do not want to give up their positions and are thereby keeping Ukraine in a state of chaos, civil war, misery and poverty?

In order to enable our colleagues to ask themselves those questions, we will ask for the draft resolution proposed by Ukraine, Western countries and their satellites to be put to a vote. For understandable reasons, we are calling for a vote against it. And in order to ensure that no doubts remain about our Ukrainian colleagues' lying arguments, we urge everyone to come to Crimea to see for themselves. We and the Crimean people have nothing to hide and plenty to be proud of.

**Mr. Al Arsan** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to explain its position on draft resolution A/74/L.12/Rev.1, entitled "Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov".

The Syrian delegation continues to believe that some members misuse the agenda item on the prevention of armed conflict, through negative practices such as submitting politicized draft resolutions that lack consensus. Those same members insist on policies of exclusion and unilateral action and disregard

the established methodology based on holding consultations, taking the concerns and positions of States into account and providing sufficient time to arrive at consensus draft resolutions. We are seeing a strange and dangerous tendency on the part of some Member States to abuse the agenda of the General Assembly in order to put political pressure on States and worsen disputes among them, even if that comes at the cost of unnecessarily and needlessly overloading our programme of work and exhausting the energy and human and financial resources of the Organization in a way that undermines the main objectives and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

In short, such draft resolutions, and in this case I mean A/74/L.12/Rev.1, are a clear reflection of political and financial polarization and a direct effort to spread disunity and discord. This draft resolution should never be seen as an attempt by its sponsors and supporters to achieve peace, security and development in the region in question for everyone without exception or discrimination.

Syria's legal understanding and political position regarding the situation in the Republic of Crimea are based on the fact that the results of the referendum conducted there on 16 March 2014 are reflected in the current stable situation in the region. We reaffirm that the draft resolution before us today is politicized and unbalanced, and does not take account of the many evolving facts and events in Crimea. As such, it cannot help to stabilize the region but will rather enable certain Governments to take advantage of the current state of relations between two historical neighbours, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, in order to exert greater political pressure on Moscow.

It should be pointed out that today, at the very same time that we are meeting here in the General Assembly, the leaders of the Normandy quartet are meeting in Paris. That summit is a clear example of how the international community gives multilateral diplomacy opportunities for resolving disputes between two neighbours, and on that basis we call on the sponsors of this draft resolution to reconsider their position and to give multilateral diplomacy a serious and genuine chance instead of deepening the dispute between Moscow and Kyiv and turning the Assembly into a platform for escalating tensions by proposing such non-consensus draft resolutions.

In conclusion, in opposing the politicization of the General Assembly, our position today is based on our respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international treaties, and on our commitment to preserving the sanctity of the rules of procedure. We must take care not to involve the General Assembly in politicized matters or to overload its agenda with non-consensus draft resolutions, especially when they do not serve to resolve disputes at regional or international levels or contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in a region or the world at large. We will therefore vote against draft resolution A/74/L.12/Rev.1 and encourage all Member States to do the same or to abstain from voting.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/74/L.12/Rev.1, entitled “Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/74/L.12/Rev.1: Liechtenstein, the Marshall Islands and New Zealand.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino,

Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Vanuatu, Zambia

*Against:*

Armenia, Belarus, Burundi, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Philippines, Russian Federation, Serbia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe

*Abstaining:*

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Paraguay, Peru, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen

*Draft resolution A/74/L.12/Rev.1 was adopted by 63 votes to 19, with 66 abstentions (resolution 74/17).*

[Subsequently, the delegation of Zambia informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.]

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): Before giving the floor to those wishing to speak in explanation of vote after the voting, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore): As a small country, Singapore is deeply committed to multilateralism and respect for international law. Singapore affirms the principles of respect for territorial integrity and non-interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign State, and respect for sovereignty and the rule of law. Singapore opposes the annexation of any

country or territory, since that is a clear violation of international law.

Singapore notes that several changes were made to the text of the resolution we have adopted this year as resolution 74/17. While we have concerns about some of the language used in the resolution, we will continue to support it as a matter of principle because it is fundamentally related to the question of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Singapore also reaffirms its clear and consistent view that all countries must adhere to international law and support the right to freedom of navigation, as provided for in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

**Mr. Tozik** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus supports reaching peace and agreement in Ukraine. We are certainly not indifferent to the fate of the neighbours who are our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, and resolving the conflict there is crucial. Compliance by the parties with the Minsk agreements remains the only appropriate basis for resolving the crisis. We intend to continue to do everything in our power to help the peace process, and we are ready to continue to provide the conditions to enable negotiations on the Minsk platform in any format. We also want to note that the Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which includes representatives of Belarus, plays an important role in the settlement process. Belarus voted against resolution 74/17, proposed by Ukraine, in connection with our firm position on documents of this kind. We consistently oppose overloading the agenda of the General Assembly and its specialized bodies with subjects that concern specific countries and are used in order to pursue political confrontation.

Considering such resolutions in the United Nations only increases confrontation and does not help us to resolve specific issues on the ground. Today's resolution intensifies the negative rhetoric and reduces the possibilities for finding a peaceful solution to the situation. The resolution also lacks the necessary references to the Minsk agreements. We think that practically speaking, only real, live dialogue and not unilateral accusations delivered from the rostrum of the United Nations can bring Ukraine long-awaited peace. We therefore support the efforts of the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine and its working subgroups, which regularly hold their meetings in Minsk. We welcome the latest round of negotiations taking place today in

Paris in the Normandy format, and we hope that its results will bring positive momentum going forward.

**Mr. Mamdouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation wishes to speak in explanation of vote to reiterate its position on the Russian and Ukrainian dispute. We are of the view that the parties concerned should pursue the peaceful resolution of disputes through direct political dialogue in furthering efforts to achieve a workable solution to the issue, on which agreements were reached in Minsk in 2015 and endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2202 (2015).

Given that there is an agreed international mechanism in place that is supported by the Security Council, addressing the dispute simultaneously in the General Assembly could intensify existing differences and exacerbate divisions among Member States instead of achieving an effective resolution of the issue. Such parallel action could even undermine the internationally recognized agreed settlement format on Ukraine. We need to strengthen the already mutually agreed mechanism.

Our principled position is to support a peaceful solution to the Ukraine and Russia dispute. We firmly believe that the issue must be resolved by the States concerned; any solution outside of that framework will not work unless endorsed by both the Russians and the Ukrainians.

**Mr. Koba** (Indonesia): On many previous occasions, Indonesia has reaffirmed its basic principle of respecting and supporting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. For us, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States is the fundamental principle governing relations among nations. Indonesia is therefore against any action involving the annexation of any sovereign country or territory, as that is a clear violation of said principle as well as international law.

With regard to the current situation in Crimea, Indonesia has continually and consistently emphasized the importance of dialogue and diplomacy between the States concerned in order to resolve the ongoing problems in Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and part of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

Indonesia abstained in the voting on resolution 74/17 because we are convinced that the resolution of the situation in Ukraine can be pursued only through a peaceful settlement process, including direct political

dialogue. We reiterate the need for all parties to exercise maximum restraint to manage the crisis responsibly and to uphold international law.

We call on all parties concerned to refrain from taking any action that may further escalate tensions and be detrimental to possible peaceful efforts.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

**Mr. Dabouis** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union remains steadfast in its commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The European Union reiterates that it does not recognize the illegal annexation of Ukraine's Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and continues to condemn this violation of international law. It remains a direct challenge to international security, with grave implications for the international legal order that protects the territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of all States.

The European Union remains committed to fully implementing its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures. The European Union calls again on States Members of the United Nations to consider similar non-recognition measures in line with resolution 68/262.

The increasing militarization of the peninsula continues to have a negative impact on the security

situation in the Black Sea region. The EU condemns the fact that Russia, in violation of international humanitarian law, automatically imposes Russian citizenship on Crimean residents and conscripts them into the armed forces of the Russian Federation.

Russia's violations of international law have led to a dangerous increase in tensions in the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov. The unjustified use of force by Russia against Ukraine on 25 November 2018 is a reminder of the negative effects of the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula on regional stability.

The European Union noted the release of unlawfully detained Ukrainian seamen and the return to Ukraine of the three vessels seized a year ago in the Black Sea near the Kerch Strait. The European Union has repeatedly stressed that Russia needs to comply with the order of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea of 25 May 2019 and return the seized vessels to Ukraine. However, we were deeply disappointed to read reports about the dismantled state in which the vessels were returned to their legitimate owner.

The European Union condemns the construction of the Kerch Bridge without Ukraine's consent, which constitutes a further violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The EU expects Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage of all ships through the Kerch Strait to and from the Azov Sea, in accordance with international law. The illegal restrictions on such passage have negative economic consequences for Ukraine's ports in the Azov Sea and the whole region.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 31.

*The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.*