



# General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

**56<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting  
Thursday, 23 January 2020, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

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

*In the absence of the President, Ms. Tang (Singapore), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

## Agenda item 110 (continued)

### Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/74/1)

**Ms. Marais** (South Africa): Allow me to thank the President for organizing the plenary debate on the report of the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, on the work of the Organization (A/74/1).

South Africa aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Togo on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/74/PV.54) and the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/74/PV.55).

South Africa wishes to commend the Organization for its accomplishments under the Secretary-General's leadership, despite the increasing challenges the international community is currently facing. Let me assure the Secretary-General of South Africa's support and cooperation as he carries out the responsibilities of leading this important yet complex Organization.

South Africa reaffirms its commitment to multilateralism as the only option for resolving today's global challenges. As the United Nations family, we must take collective action and find solutions to address the global problems that affect all of us.

We are excited about the programme for 2020, in particular the seventy-fifth anniversary of this august body, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and the tenth anniversary of UN-Women. Furthermore, we welcome the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity and congratulate him for reaching the target a year earlier than projected.

As an elected member of the Security Council, South Africa marked the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security through the adoption of resolution 2493 (2019) during its presidency last year and will ensure that the resolution is mainstreamed into the work of the Security Council. This becomes more prudent in the light of the Secretary-General's concern about the pushback on gains with regard to gender made over the past years.

The Secretary-General's support for Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU) and the African Continental Free Trade Area, which strengthens United Nations-AU cooperation and peace and security on the African continent, especially in Libya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is also welcomed.

We are especially pleased that attention will be given to our young people through a high-level plenary to be held on 31 March. Young people are an important component of society; they should therefore be empowered and prepared to take up the baton.

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South Africa also welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts aimed at ensuring that there are adequate resources for the United Nations programmes that are important to developing countries, especially in the area of peacekeeping. We also welcome the implementation of reforms of the Organization's peace and security pillar, development system and management so as to ensure the effectiveness of the United Nations and so that we deliver on our mandate.

South Africa further welcomes the efforts by the Economic Commission for Africa in supporting African countries to develop strategies to advance their development objectives and to mainstream and integrate their development plans in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. We look forward to the third South Summit, which will be held in Kampala in June to address the development challenges of the global South and call upon our partners to support the initiatives that emanate from the conference, in particular with respect to investment and development cooperation. We further welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons and look forward to the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Human rights are a fundamental pillar of the United Nations and a very important element in the maintenance of peace. South Africa will continue to work with other Member States towards a world that respects fundamental human rights and international law.

Among the priorities for Africa this year is the issue of silencing the guns, and we welcome the Secretary-General's support for that.

The United Nations must reinvigorate and give new impetus to the issue of the reform of the Security Council. A reformed peace and security architecture will ensure an equitable, well-represented and fully reformed Council that is able to live up to the current realities.

The Secretary-General has repeatedly expressed his concern that we are not on track to meet the Sustainable Development Goal targets. In this regard, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and voluntary national reviews, among other mechanisms that have been put in place to monitor and ensure that we implement our targets, must be given the necessary priority. Commitments made through the Addis Ababa Action Agenda are unfortunately not forthcoming, and

we call upon our partners to honour these commitments. We reiterate that the nexus between peace, security and development cannot be overemphasized; our efforts should be galvanized to seek to achieve that focus.

We have no doubt that during this decade of action, we will see a reinvigorated Organization working towards reaching the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the achievement of which will reinforce the relevance of the United Nations and contribute to lasting peace across the world.

**Mr. Islam (Bangladesh):** I join others in thanking the Secretary-General for sharing his priorities for 2020 with us (see A/74/PV.54). The year 2020 is of particular significance, as it will see the convergence and culmination of a number of important and landmark occasions and processes, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations being the high point of all. This year therefore has an extensive mandate. While posing a challenge, it can also be a tremendous opportunity to rise to the expectations of the people of the world.

Against that backdrop, the Secretary-General's priorities for 2020 are very important, since they start to map out where things are not going well and where Member States should focus their efforts. Such priorities are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and address the challenges and realities that the United Nations is facing. We commend the Secretary-General's emphasis on implementation of the SDGs, as this year also begins the decade of action. In that context, we hope that the interests and challenges of developing countries, including the graduation of least developed countries, the emergence of new frontiers and technologies and climate challenges, will receive due attention as urgent needs.

The mandated reviews and processes taking place this year should also be able to bring about some tangible results. We are happy to see that the priorities outlined by the Secretary-General also closely reflect our national priorities. We stand ready to contribute to any efforts undertaken by the General Assembly in taking such priorities forward towards their desired outcomes.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization (see A/74/1), which provides a good overview, grounded in reality, albeit sobering. In the face of the emerging realities, multilateralism is our best option and we must prove it through action. We have to restore people's trust not only in the United Nations but also in institutions and political organizations. In

that regard, communicating the work of the United Nations to the people of the world is crucial and we believe that the United Nations can be more effective to that end.

The report rightly focuses on making the United Nations more transparent and accountable in order to better implement its mandate, which is the ultimate objective of the ongoing reform process. However, that has to be complemented by a shift in mindset. We wish to see the new generation of United Nations country teams and the reinvigorated resident coordinator system helping Member States in a concrete way to achieve the SDGs.

We also wish to see the United Nations making tangible progress in resolving the various crises and conflicts that plague the world. We are encouraged that the Rohingya crisis has not escaped the attention of the report among other conflict situations in the world.

Strengthening the rule of law and accountability for human rights violations are critical enablers for conflict resolution. In that regard, the United Nations legal bodies must be further utilized. As a current member of the Human Rights Council, we believe that its mechanisms should enjoy greater support from Member States in order to fulfil their respective mandates.

Human displacement continues to be a global problem, as is the case for Bangladesh, which hosts 1.1 million Rohingya forcibly displaced from Myanmar. The United Nations humanitarian assistance programmes are providing a tremendous service for such peoples caught in conflict but that should not relegate the primacy of a political solution. While the United Nations development architecture has proved to be useful, it must further shore up efforts to address the development needs and challenges of developing countries. The Vienna process is a useful tool, and we will be happy to share our development experiences as we present our voluntary review in Vienna this July, our second in three years.

Financing for development remains a great concern for all developing countries. In order to address that, all the tools and strategies that the United Nations has developed must be put to the best use with the support of our development partners. Nothing can be more of an existential threat to a climate vulnerable country such as Bangladesh than climate change. We need to pool our collective efforts to bring us back on track to realize the Paris Agreement. The fourth industrial revolution

provides enormous opportunities, but the challenges that it poses to relatively technologically constrained developing countries must also be taken into account.

We will continue to support the Organization's pursuit of peace and security through our contribution to United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding, with a particular focus on prevention. Signs coming from the United Nations early warning systems need due cognizance of conflict prevention.

The disarmament agenda should be allowed to make progress to complement the development and human rights pillars. In view of the increased fatalities of United Nations peacekeepers, we feel that it is time for the General Assembly, the most representative body, to take a serious look at the issue. We have every confidence in the Secretary-General's leadership and my delegation extends its full support for his efforts.

**Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/74/PV.55). We welcome the report on the work of the Organization (A/74/1) presented by Secretary-General Guterres (see A/74/PV.54). In his briefing, the Secretary-General made many important observations that merit our close attention (see A/74/PV.54).

Currently, the world is undergoing profound changes not seen in a century, with a significantly higher level of uncertainty and instability. The rise of unilateralism undermines international norms and the rule of law. The spread of protectionism is slowing global economic growth. Rampant power politics are threatening world peace and stability.

Traditional and non-traditional security threats are interlinked and global governance faces increasing challenges. Regions see constant turmoil and flashpoints continue to flare up. Recently, the situation in the Gulf region of the Middle East suddenly became tense and, at one point, was on the verge of war.

At the same time, peace and development remain the theme of our time. Globalization and multipolarization are moving forward despite the many difficulties. A new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is gathering momentum. The future of society depends on whether countries make the right choices between cooperation and

confrontation, multilateralism and unilateralism and openness and isolation.

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and the end of the Second World War. Reaffirming the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations is the best way to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization and is extremely relevant in today's world. At this time, 75 years later, all Member States should bear in mind the founding purpose of the United Nations and resolutely shoulder the responsibility of maintaining world peace and promoting common development.

In general, China supports the eight priorities outlined by Secretary-General Guterres in his report. We believe that this year, the United Nations should prioritize the following areas in its work.

The first area is abiding by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and firmly upholding multilateralism, which represents the desire of the people and the trend of the times. Unilateralism, based exclusively on the supremacy of one's own country, is not feasible or popular. All parties should seize the opportunity of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and related events to jointly defend the international order with international law at its core and support the United Nations in playing a greater role in international affairs so as to promote the establishment of a more equitable and effective global governance system.

The second element is attaching greater importance to development and accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The international community should take the opportunity of the decade of action for the 2030 Agenda and implement a people-centred development concept. It should prioritize the Sustainable Development Goals that are relevant to developing countries, such as those on poverty reduction, the eradication of hunger, education, health care and strengthening infrastructure, among others, so that no one is left behind.

In May, China will host the second Global Conference on Sustainable Transport in Beijing. We welcome the active participation of all States with a view to jointly building a global partnership on connectivity.

The third area is deepening international cooperation and working together to seize opportunities and tackle

challenges. The world is a global village where States are highly interdependent. No country can tackle the challenges facing humankind alone or return to an island of self-isolation. We should create opportunities to open up, seek win-win results in cooperation, jointly solve global problems such as climate change and terrorism, strengthen practical cooperation in a digital economy, 5G, artificial intelligence and other fields, and build an open world economy.

In October, China will host the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming, Yunnan province. We look forward to working with all parties to promote the development of a global ecological civilization and striving to realize a wonderful vision of the sustainable use of biodiversity, benefit-sharing and harmonious coexistence between humankind and nature by 2050.

The fourth element is strengthening the unity of Member States, seeking common ground while putting aside differences and properly addressing disputes. International affairs should be discussed and dealt with by everyone. All countries, big or small, should be equal and respect each other's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. All countries should respect each other's development path, chosen independently, and each other's right to pursue a better life and space for development. We should resolve disputes peacefully through political and diplomatic means and oppose the arbitrary use or threat of force, long-arm jurisdiction and unilateral sanctions and politicizing or adopting double standards on issues such as counter-terrorism and human rights.

Human history, like a river, runs forever, witnessing both peaceful times and great upheavals. At present, the international order is a critical juncture. Sources of instability and threats have increased significantly worldwide. The more complex the challenges, the more important for the international community to firmly uphold multilateralism and jointly promote the development of a community with a shared future for humankind.

China has always supported world peace, contributed to global development and defended the international order. We stand ready to work with other Member States to participate more actively and more profoundly in the work of the United Nations in various fields and to tirelessly strive to realize the purpose and

principles of the United Nations Charter and to build a community with a shared future for humankind.

*(spoke in English)*

Before I conclude, let me say that tomorrow is the Chinese New Year, the Year of the Rat. Let me take this opportunity to wish all those in this Hall and, through them, all their colleagues and, through their colleagues, all those whom Members represent a happy, prosperous, peaceful and harmonious New Year. I wish everyone all the best for the Year of the Rat.

**Mr. Flynn** (Ireland): Let me wish the Ambassador of China in advance a very Happy New Year. Let me begin by joining others in thanking the Secretary-General for his report (A/74/1) and very clear words to us yesterday morning (see A/74/PV.54). We could not agree more that, on the eve of the seventy-fifth anniversary of this Organization's founding, our complex and interdependent world faces a range of interacting and critical challenges. Those include increasingly protracted conflicts, where old tactics and new weapons cause untold humanitarian suffering; existential climate and biodiversity crises; the threats and opportunities of new technologies; growing inequality; and an increasing pushback against the advances in gender equality that we have made in recent decades. For a small country such as Ireland, perched on the western edge of Europe, we understand that unilateral approaches are futile.

We believe that multilateralism is essential to safeguarding the gains that we have made over the past seven decades and to addressing the challenges that await us in the new decade and beyond. It is for those reasons that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the framework for all our work and that we wholeheartedly support the three pillars of the United Nations reform. Modernizing the United Nations to make it fit for purpose is essential. Today, I would like to focus on three particular priorities of importance to Ireland.

First, all of us at the United Nations must lead and show that the multilateral system is capable of responding to existential threats to our climate, biodiversity and oceans. The United Nations is the only body that can coordinate our necessary response to climate change. As we follow up on the 2019 Climate Action Summit held in September, we hope that we can all listen to and meet the demands of our young people and act now to combat climate change. We must all

go to the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Glasgow, with enhanced ambition.

The Ocean Conference, to be held in June 2020, will be a crucial moment in our collective efforts towards generating a sustainable and healthy ocean. Portugal and Kenya can count on Ireland's unwavering support, as can Palau and Denmark, as they work to deliver a strong political declaration.

Equally important is the work on biological diversity. We welcome the Nature Summit to be held in 2020, which should learn lessons from the experience of the Climate Summit and build political momentum towards the 2020 Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Kunming under the able stewardship of China, which has shown exemplary leadership in that area.

The second priority, as we highlighted here yesterday (see A/74/PV.55), is the need to push back against the pushback when it comes to gender equality, particularly in this year of landmark anniversaries. We must all step up to ensure that those anniversaries can truly be constructive celebrations, not mere acknowledgements of the passing of time.

I wish to recognize the outstanding leadership of UN-Women, France and Mexico in taking forward the Generation Equality initiative. Ireland is committed to making a contribution to that work. We hope that, through our event on girls' education here at the United Nations on 11 February, we will help to build momentum towards a meaningful and transformative "new deal" on gender equality that will meet the needs, and frankly the demands, of this coming generation.

The third and final priority that I wish to highlight is the continued efforts towards the strengthening of the protection of civilians in armed conflict. While we welcome the advances over the past 20 years, civilians continue to bear the brunt of conflict across the world. The increasing urbanization of armed conflict has led to new horrors for civilians. It is for that reason that Ireland attaches particular priority to addressing the issue of explosive weapons in populated areas. Ireland has begun consulting with States to take forward work on a political declaration, which, we hope, can be adopted later this year. I urge all States to engage constructively in this process.

The year 2019 saw the Security Council mark 20 years of the protection of civilians agenda and a culture of protection that has been instilled in its work. Yet the Council often seems incapable of acting in some of the worst crises. Nowhere has that been clearer than in the context of the Syrian crisis. The misuse of the veto and the politicization of humanitarian aid are but two examples of how the Council has failed to live up to its mandate and protect those caught in the crossfire of war. Collectively, we can, and must, do more to ensure that the Council delivers on its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. Ireland hopes to be in a position to play its part in 2021-2022, when we aspire to serve as an elected member of the Council.

As we prepare to mark 75 years of the United Nations, we would do well to remind ourselves that human rights, sustainable development and peace are three equal, mutually reinforcing and indispensable pillars of the United Nations Charter. Like a three-legged stool, if one leg is missing, the stool will collapse from under us. Ireland will work to continue to support the Secretary-General in furthering all three pillars of the United Nations work in order to bring about what is best for us all.

**Ms. Mohammed** (Nigeria): My delegation aligns itself with statements delivered by the Permanent Representative of Togo, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/74/PV.54), and by the Permanent Representative of Guyana, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/74/PV.55). My delegation welcomes the quality report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/74/1). As 2020 marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and the commencement of the decade of action for the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, my delegation believes that this is an opportune moment to reflect on the workings of the Organization, which has continued to reinforce the importance of multilateral cooperation with a view to enhancing its capacity to meeting current and future challenges.

We are glad to note that the focus of the Secretary-General aligns with the visions outlined by the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session, particularly in the areas of peace and security, poverty eradication, zero hunger, quality education, climate action and inclusion.

My delegation is as concerned as the Secretary-General about the deepening global challenges that have

continued to transcend borders. The health of our planet is precarious as a result of insufficient climate action. Violent extremism and terrorism have continued to destabilize countries and regions. Great Power rivalry is on the increase again, and support for multilateralism and the fundamental principles of the United Nations is dwindling. The urgency of those challenges and the threats that they individually and collectively pose to people, the planet, peace and security require enhanced international cooperation, partnerships and innovative solutions. In that context, we support the Secretary-General's strategy for addressing these and other emerging global challenges.

My delegation is of the view that peace and security remain a central pillar of the United Nations system and for all Member States, as development cannot take place in their absence. We encourage all partners to support the United Nations Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the Secretary-General's new disarmament agenda and to ensure that developments in new technologies are not used to propagate an arms race and conflict but rather deployed to meet the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a manner that leaves no one behind. We also wish to highlight the surge in the illicit movement of small arms and light weapons, particularly in Africa, and call for focused multilateral actions to stem the tide.

We appreciate and support the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and all other members of his team towards ensuring the progress made in the reform of the United Nations development system in order to make it fit for purpose. Unfortunately, the report of the Secretary-General has also made it clear that the world is not on track to achieve it. It is our view that the reform has been successful in putting a formidable structure and process in place. We are particularly glad that we have moved to the implementation phase. There is positive news from the capital regarding the activities of the country team and the Resident Coordinator. We must continue to ensure that the benefits of the reform are visible, concrete and measurable in meeting the needs of all people, including those in developing countries.

Let me conclude by stating that we are fully in agreement with the Secretary-General regarding the fact that those that contribute more to climate change should contribute more to its solution. Climate action and financing for development are critical tests of the seriousness of the international system as we enter

the decade of action and delivery on the Sustainable Development Goals. We wish to reiterate Nigeria's ongoing support for the United Nations system and we will continue to appreciate the strong voice of the Secretary-General on issues of illicit financial flows and the promotion of investment in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Mr. Al Fazari** (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank His Excellency the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/74/1. We thank him for the priorities that he outlines in the report and with which we align ourselves.

The report coincides with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. This is an opportunity for us to review the work of the Organization and steer it in line with the aspirations of Member States so as to achieve an effective United Nations that addresses the concerns and meets the interests of Member States within an international system that respects the principles of the United Nations and the provisions of international law. Undoubtedly, the challenges that the Secretary-General notes in his report are significant. However, collective and multilateral work will enable us to address those challenges and to reap joint and mutual benefits that serve all.

Furthermore, the use of new technologies and scientific developments can help to quickly overcome challenges that face the international community such as poverty, climate change and hate speech, while ensuring greater employment opportunities for young people, strengthening digital cooperation and confronting other urgent international challenges. That will lead to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and preparing for the future.

Given the importance that my country's Government attaches to promoting economic growth and sustainable development in various countries, we would like to acknowledge the role played by the United Nations system in supporting countries' efforts with a view to implementing the plans that lead to attaining the SDGs. We would also like to emphasize that the Sultanate of Oman was able to achieve the SDGs as set out in its first voluntary report submitted in 2019, and we are very proud of that.

The maintenance of international peace and security must be among the top priorities of this Organization. That requires multilateral work in order to prevent

conflicts and preserve and sustain peace. Despite the successes of the United Nations during 75 years of joint international work, the future calls on us to work together in order to redirect the Organization and its entities as appropriate to overcome the challenges to international peace and security.

I cannot but stress the position of my country, which calls for promoting all the provisions of the United Nations Charter, in particular Chapter VI, which emphasizes the pacific settlement of disputes. The promotion of peace diplomacy saves lives as well as money and efforts.

In conclusion, my country's delegation would like to reaffirm our confidence in the Secretary-General. We commend his efforts to develop the work mechanisms within the Organization with a view to meeting the aspirations that are commensurate with the upcoming stage.

**Mr. Popolizio Bardales** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this meeting and welcome the lucid briefing made yesterday by Secretary-General António Guterres (see A/74/PV.54), who reminded us of the need to bolster international cooperation and multilateralism in order to ensure a coherent response to the pressing challenges and problems shared by all our countries — what he called the four major threats — that we must confront together in the auspicious framework of the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

In 2021, Peru will celebrate its bicentenary as an independent republic. We aspire to be recognized as a robust and modern democracy governed by the rule of law and the protection and promotion of human rights, with a national development strategy that incorporates the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and are always ready to contribute to prevention efforts and to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Nevertheless, Peru is no stranger to the global phenomenon of corruption, which threatens the stability and development of our countries, undermines democratic institutions, promotes impunity and weakens people's trust in their Governments. We therefore assign the highest priority to the fight against this scourge, in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption and Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda. It is within this framework that, together with Colombia, we have coordinated efforts

with various Member States to hold, in the first half of 2021, a special session of the General Assembly in order to fully explore the scope of this delicate issue and to outline joint strategies to confront it. I am sure that we will be able to count on the constructive support and participation of all, and that the all-out fight against corruption and impunity will become a global crusade.

Peru aspires to achieving the SDGs by 2030 as an appropriate universal framework for the promotion of peace, development and human rights. We have undertaken national efforts to achieve them with political courage and determination, and have encouraged the participation, in particular, of women and young people, to whom we have a responsibility to leave behind an inclusive and sustainable world free from poverty. Financial inclusion plays an important and ultimately cross-cutting role in the setting and fulfilment of the SDGs and is highlighted in eight targets of the 17 Goals. Additionally, it is a field with broad potential, and its ability to improve the well-being of the population has been increasing exponentially thanks to the implementation of new technologies.

Since 2015, Peru has been implementing a national financial-inclusion strategy, having experienced sustained growth in this area in recent years. Such progress and its positive social impact encouraged us to promote this issue more intensively within the Organization, which led us to facilitate the resolutions adopted by the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly and to assume the chairmanship, together with Indonesia and Tanzania, of the Group of Friends of Financial Inclusion. We note that the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, to be held in July, is an ideal space to continue making progress on this crucial theme.

Peru is particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. The retreat of tropical glaciers has led to frequent droughts or floods, which lead to food insecurity and new migrations, which, in turn, pose challenges to the maintenance of peace. We therefore welcome the fact that climate change is among the Secretary-General's top priorities and a central element of the so-called decade of action. We must each rise to the great challenge ahead to the best of our respective abilities. In this regard, we emphasize the need for enhanced cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, financial institutions, the private sector, academia and civil society, in order to develop holistic, more coherent, effective and efficient strategies. To this

end, the 2019 Climate Action Summit has generated important momentum that we must take advantage of to stoke our ambition and carry out the necessary actions to increase our nationally determined contributions.

As one of the world's top 10 megadiverse countries, we know too well the effects of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystems. We are convinced of the urgency of implementing transformative changes that will prevent the disappearance of an enormous number of species. Peru pledges its active participation in order to ensure the success of the next Global Biodiversity Summit.

I would also like to express Peru's grave concern about the enormous challenge posed by the massive Venezuelan migration to host countries in Latin America, which now exceeds 4.8 million people and has exceeded the budgetary and institutional capacities of the States in the region to address this exodus caused by the deep political, economic, social and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. Peru alone has taken in around 900,000 migrants to date and expects more to come. In this delicate context, it is critical to continue mobilizing the international community and the United Nations system, in particular, in order to guarantee stable and predictable funding for Venezuela's Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan.

I conclude by expressing our full support for the Secretary-General's laudable diplomatic work, reaffirming Peru's willingness to contribute to the achievement of his management objectives and to contribute in the search for concrete solutions to the four major and imminent threats to which he referred in his briefing yesterday morning. As he said in his remarks, we do not want pretty speeches for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization, but concrete solutions to these four threats.

**Mr. Koba** (Indonesia): Indonesia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/74/PV.55).

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing yesterday (see A/74/PV.54) and the interactive discussion with the States Members of the United Nations that followed. Given that this year is the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we must put the spotlight on multilateralism, as it is our hope for a better world.

Indonesia would like to highlight several points. First, we appreciate the ongoing process of reforming the United Nations and reiterate the importance of the Organization's sustainable financing. Indonesia highly appreciates the Secretary-General's efforts aimed at reforming the United Nations so as to make the Organization more efficient, effective, responsive and representative. We look forward to the positive impact of the reform on the United Nations, which we must ensure is fit for purpose and cost-effective in addressing the challenges our world is facing today. Further, we acknowledge the importance of sustainable financing for the United Nations, which is crucial to ensure that the Organization can implement all of its mandates.

Secondly, we recognize the need for the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We have witnessed tremendous strides since 2015 on poverty reduction and its many dimensions, such as declining extreme poverty and child mortality rates, and greater access to education, vaccinations, clean water, electricity and essential health services. Nevertheless, challenges remain in specific pockets. It is therefore urgent to strengthen cooperation in order to accelerate and enhance the scale of implementation of the SDGs. We also need to strengthen cooperation to combat climate change. This year's session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will provide an excellent opportunity to do just that. In the next cycle, we must ensure positive results in our discussion on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the review of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Economic and Social Council.

Thirdly, we must improve the quality and effectiveness of peacekeeping missions, including the role of women peacekeepers. Partnerships should be strengthened and, in this case, the emphasis is on the need to strengthen regional organizations' role in fostering peace in their region. Indonesia believes that women can make a difference in bringing about greater peace after conflict, and supports increasing the role of women in the peace process.

Lastly, I would like to touch upon the situation in the Middle East. Indonesia expresses its readiness to support the Secretary-General's priorities on this matter. Indonesia reaffirms its solidarity with the Palestinian people and its support of all efforts to

achieve a two-State solution based on the internationally agreed parameters.

Indonesia believes that the United Nations is the ultimate global institution for multilateralism, where nations — large and small — interact on the basis of sovereign equality. It is therefore our best option to ensure global peace and prosperity. In conclusion, I would like to underline that Indonesia is ready to work closely with the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to ensure the successful implementation of the programme priorities for 2020.

**Mrs. Gilmutdinova** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Secretary-General for preparing his informative report (A/74/1) on the work of the Organization over the past year. Our foray further into a multipolar world was accompanied by the potential for greater conflict and a growing terrorist threat, more dividing lines and migration.

We also saw something similar in the area of development against the backdrop of economic progress. We witnessed climate change, inequality and weak infrastructure, and we note that there were few opportunities for young people. In those circumstances, the United Nations had to constantly keep its finger on the pulse in order to continue monitor the key changes in the international arena and react to them quickly. Of course, an important way of doing so was through the Secretariat and the Secretary-General himself, and we thank them for that.

We understand that the United Nations needs to adapt to a changing world and that its reform is an ongoing process. New institutions and structures are being created, new agendas arise and peacekeeping activities are becoming more diverse. At the same time, some assessments of the developments in this area and the proposals included in the report for the future give rise to questions on our part.

Pursuant to the statement that the United Nations is the optimal platform for pooling the efforts of States and civil society to resolve topical issues, we are all in favour of making sure that the United Nations is as transparent as possible. At the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that the United Nations is an intergovernmental organization and that each Member State has the prerogative to make its own decisions. We also note the Secretariat's efforts to advance conflict resolution and peacekeeping, which has been helpful in resolving various crises on the Security Council's

agenda. At the same time, we regret the fact that the report does not address the nefarious role played by outside interference in creating new and maintaining old conflicts. We call on the Secretariat to pay close attention to that phenomenon.

We call the attention of the Assembly to the report's loose interpretation of the definitions of such concepts as human rights and international humanitarian law violations. That practice is unacceptable. We welcome the report's coverage of humanitarian coordination in resolving so-called forgotten crises. In our view, the goal of the Organization's humanitarian pillar is to continue working patiently and consistently with donors and State recipients of humanitarian assistance in order to ensure that we are effectively and comprehensively meeting the needs of the people living in countries affected by crises.

We agree that it is important to ensure that more humanitarian action is taken with regard to the crisis in Yemen, which is the most complex and has the greatest funding needs. We are convinced that the humanitarian assistance to Yemen must be provided to all people, regardless of which parties control what territory within the country. When assessing the humanitarian needs of people, we need to make sure that our data is as reliable as possible. If we do so, then the humanitarian work of the United Nations in crisis situations all around the world will not be politicized.

We support the initiative, launched in 2018, to create a thematic online portal that accumulates country data about the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. In addition, we welcome the information in the report on the growing number of countries that have provided their national indicators. Incidentally, Russia signed on to the online monitoring system in 2019 and published its own official statistics covering the years 2015 to 2018. We also share the Secretary-General's desire to help countries in the area of armed conflict, disarmament and non-proliferation for the purpose of developing and strengthening the existing system of treaties and ensuring international peace and security.

We regret the fact that, due to the unresolved organizational issues in 2019, the Disarmament Commission session never took place. In that regard, we hope that the Secretariat and the Secretary-General will help to resolve visa issues in order to ensure that there are no more unpleasant surprises like those we encountered

last year. Otherwise, we will once again raise the issue of finding an alternative venue. We are committed to the goal of building a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and we support the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure that there is a broad exchange of opinions. That is particularly important given growing points of divergence between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States.

We welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to implement the agreed reforms to the United Nations development system. We are convinced that the main goal of reform should be to make sure that the development system is in line with the requirement under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; that there is practical benefit provided by programmes, funds and specialized agencies in the area of international development; that there is a clear positioning of the development system in the United Nations in general; and that responsibility is distributed among United Nations agencies and entities.

At the same time, we expect that the ultimate outcome of reform will not be the imposition of new, frequently politicized mandates on agencies, accompanied by the overburdening of their staff, but rather making sure that there are clear principles for the work and management of the development system and that the role and interaction of national Governments with the system are strengthened. We are convinced that a good example of an effective report is one that details the savings of the development system and ensures that those savings are invested in resident coordinators and project work.

In conclusion, we must pay special attention to ensuring that weapons do not end up in the hands of terrorism. That is not reflected in the current report. We expect that the Secretariat will carefully investigate the many instances in which members of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in Syria ended up with impressive arsenals of modern weaponry. We must not remain silent when we learn that jihadists in the region would not have been able to counter the armed forces of several States in the conflict without arms support coming from abroad.

**Mr. Al Arsan** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/74/PV.55).

Allow me to present the following points in my national capacity. Yesterday His Excellency the Secretary-General delivered an important and transparent briefing, though many of its messages and content were worrisome (see A/74/PV.54). One might even say that the briefing sounded the alarm of what is to come if we fail to respond to the challenges he mentioned. We must confront those challenges through a collective process and a balanced, sustainable multilateral system in which we recognize our differences and disputes and address them in a realistic manner so that our main priority — or our only priority — remains the welfare of people, wherever they may be, without double standards.

The Secretary-General frankly diagnosed the imminent threats facing humankind and our planet in the twenty-first century, chiefly the return of epic geostrategic tensions, the spread of destructive conflicts and terrorist acts, the rising nuclear threat, the terrifying increase in military manufacturing and weapons trafficking either between countries or illicitly, as well as migration, forced displacement, the dangerous current and future repercussions of the global climate crisis, the challenges posed by fast-paced technological developments, and the accompanying misuse of technology and its dangerous ethical, political, social and security threats for our societies and our world.

I choose to highlight the challenges mentioned by the Secretary-General so that I can focus on the essence of the crisis facing our world today, which many representatives, including the Permanent Representative of Singapore, mentioned yesterday (see A/74/PV.55). The multilateral system is facing a real crisis and is in danger of erosion and collapse due to populist and protectionist theories, policies and practices, as well as the widespread of unilateral practices among the Governments of many countries, notably those with economic, political and military influence.

The work being done within the United Nations is seriously suffering from political and financial polarization, which has put a lot of pressure on the Organization's programmes in terms of funding and the role of donors in passing the national policies of influential Governments or imposing specific working methods on the United Nations with regard to how it deals with many thorny issues, including the situation in my country, Syria.

International relations have become contentious, with practices such as the use and the threat of use of military force, the imposition of suffocating economic blockades that only harm ordinary citizens or the negative interference in the internal affairs of countries leading to destabilization, chaos and destruction. Some States and Governments are investing politically and militarily in armed radical terrorist groups, thereby causing one of the most dangerous forms of proxy war because the threats of terrorism know no borders and spare no one.

The most important consequence of those risks is that, as countries and as peoples, we have begun to lose confidence in our ability to take multilateral collective action and in our ability to dialogue and listen to one another without passing premature judgment. We have begun to lose confidence in the standing position and ability of the United Nations to embrace us all in a professional and balanced manner leading to the maintenance of international peace and security, and to the achievement of sustainable development, welfare and stability for all, without leaving anyone behind, and free from economic, financial, political and military pressure. As the Secretary-General said yesterday, the spread of the phenomenon of mistrust causes unease and resentment, leading people to believe that globalization will not work for them.

Following the constructive dialogue with the Secretary-General, we would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm that the Syrian Arab Republic recognizes full well that we are dealing with facts and not with ideals or dreams. We know very well that some donor Governments will not commit to the principles of humanitarian work on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of countries and non-interference in their internal affairs. We also know very well in Syria that many of those Governments will continue to negatively interfere in the Syrian political process and, through economic pressure and blockade, will seek to weaken the main principle behind that process — that it must be Syrian-led, Syrian-owned and free from any foreign intervention.

In Syria, we are not concerned about donor funds, but we would like to reaffirm that the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy to facilitate the Syrian political process will remain precarious and targeted as long as the economic blockade and unilateral coercive economic measures remain in place,

which aim mainly to prevent the flow of investment and the reconstruction efforts in Syria.

The position of the United Nations on the imposition of unilateral coercive economic measures on some peoples of the world is clear: they are deemed illegal, and every year the United Nations calls for them to be stopped. Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development stresses that such illegal measures disrupt national efforts and the ability to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. Allow me to quote Mr. Idriss Jazairy, Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, who said about the situation in Syria that those measures are:

*(spoke in English)*

“imposing misery on an entire population. The measures are clearly indiscriminate and thus arguably unlawful under international law.”  
(A/HRC/42/46, para. 42).

*(spoke in Arabic)*

The Syrian people therefore deserve the adoption by the United Nations of a different approach than the imposition of unilateral coercive economic measures, which the Organization considers to be illegal and because the Secretariat is unable to positively intervene in the light of its failure to link humanitarian action in Syria to the conditions imposed by the Governments of certain donor countries concerning political intervention.

Following nine years of a terrorist war, Syrian citizens today do not need a box of food items; rather, like the citizens of other countries, they need to be allowed to rebuild their economy and capabilities. Syrian citizens do not need the funds of Western donors, but they do need those donors to lift the economic blockade imposed on them. Syrian citizens, like other citizens worldwide, do not need to be given fish; they need the international community to give them the ability to buy fishing gear so that they can practice fishing every day and live in security and stability without fear for the future.

I apologize for taking so long. My delegation had hoped that this important discussion would be based on the principles of professionalism and integrity, free of politicized unilateral agendas that do not serve multilateralism, and an effort to rebuild trust among the Members of the Organization. However, the Permanent

Representative of Liechtenstein remains determined, as usual, to play a dishonest and unjustified role. We in Syria are fully aware of the dimensions of and reasons behind that role. The Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein has chosen to sidestep all of the dangerous, sensitive and important issues addressed by the United Nations and to abandon the functions of representing his country and its interests at the United Nations. Instead, he has chosen to spend his time playing the role of the personal lawyer and public-relations manager of the so-called International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM). Either way, we in Syria are not concerned with the nature of the functions that the representative of Liechtenstein has chosen for himself. However, we wish to respond to the spurious claims he made in his statement yesterday (see A/74/PV.55) pertaining to the Mechanism. In that regard, I would like to say the following.

First, the Syrian Arab Republic and a considerable number of Member States have referred to real and serious procedural and legal violations that characterize resolution 71/248, which established the IIIM. What the representative of Liechtenstein said yesterday — that we sought question the role of the General Assembly — is not true at all. We challenge him and others who believe the same to respond to any of the legal points that we have posed, which prove the illegitimate nature of IIIM.

Secondly, we reaffirm that the General Assembly went beyond its mandate and violated Article 12 of the Charter when it encroached on the mandate of the Security Council, which has to date been exclusively entrusted with addressing the situation in my country, Syria. Furthermore, Articles 10, 11, 12 and 22 of the Charter expressly set out the mandates of the General Assembly. Nowhere do they say that the General Assembly has the authority to establish an investigative or judicial body, let alone a similar mechanism.

Thirdly, the Syrian Arab Republic, the country concerned, did not ask the United Nations for technical or legal assistance in establishing such a body. Everyone knows that the request of the country concerned is necessary to provide such assistance. Now that the General Assembly has involved itself in establishing this illegal body, we ask the Assembly once again: Would any reasonable person expect the Government of

the Syrian Arab Republic to accept the collection of so-called evidence from Geneva, thousands of kilometres from its national borders, through an irregular body such as the IIIM, which was established without the approval of and without consulting with the country concerned and without providing minimum guarantees and criteria regarding the credibility of the collection of evidence or the so-called chain of custody?

Fourthly, we reaffirm that the Syrian Arab Republic and a considerable number of Member States will remain committed to our position of not recognizing the so-called IIIM and of rejecting any form of cooperation therewith. As to the funding of that illegal body through the regular budget of the United Nations, my country would like to disassociate itself from the General Assembly resolution 74/262, on that issue. We will not pay even \$1 to fund such a suspicious entity. I would ask any Member State wishing to contribute to funding the Mechanism to remember that IIIM is the outcome of violations of the Charter. The Mechanism was born dead and will stay dead. I would therefore ask Members to stop wasting the money of the United Nations by using it to carry out suspicious acts that serve only to implement the dangerous and destructive policies of those supporting them.

Fifthly, allow me to conclude that when it comes to the Mechanism, the Syrian Arab Republic, despite the terrorist war against it, is proud to have national legal and judicial institutions with the genuine means and will to achieve justice, accountability and reparations. The current political process in Syria will deal with these issues in a serious manner and as a matter of priority. If specialized United Nations entities wish to provide technical and legal assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic to build its capacities and strengthen the ability of its national institutions, they know which door to knock on in Syria and the rules of procedure to be followed in order to provide such legal and technical assistance.

In conclusion, we call on the Secretary-General to ensure that the constructive dialogue held yesterday and today becomes a periodic sustainable practice, even if only monthly, to follow up on the implementation of the contents of his reports on the work of the Organization and the challenges facing it, as well as the collective multilateral work. Such meetings strengthen the culture of dialogue and allow us to express various concerns and challenges even if our opinions, agendas and interests differ. Today we have only one option: a transparent

dialogue and collective efforts based on equality of rights and obligations rather than political and financial polarization. Otherwise, the alternatives will be truly dangerous to the future of our Organization, our world and the security, peace and stability of our people.

I apologize for having taken so long.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 110.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/74/1?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** I shall now call on the representative of Pakistan, who has requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Jehanzeb Khan (Pakistan):** My delegation is obliged to take the floor in response to the statement made by the Indian representative yesterday (see A/74/PV.55). It is startling that those whose very identity is based on peddling supremacist ideologies, new fascist beliefs, bigotry and intolerance, whose singular accomplishment is to denude India of any pretence of its secular credentials, have the audacity to lecture others on hate speech and minority rights. While truth and reality have little place in the saffron India of today, I should like to remind the Indian representative of an inconvenient fact: the mothership of the ruling party in India, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), is a fascist organization that endorsed Hitler's aim to purify the Aryan race by eliminating the Jews. The RSS founder and leaders have advocated a similar cleansing of Muslims and other minorities from India's Aryan Hindu population.

For these purveyors of bigotry and hatred, it is indeed gratifying that one of their most promising protégés, whose hands are drenched with the blood of thousands of innocent Muslims in Gujarat, is overseeing the Hindutva agenda at the national level. Today RSS gangs of violent thugs are organizing and behaving like Hitler's Brown Shirts. Minorities are being lynched by cow vigilantes for such offences as eating beef or transporting cows. Indian journalists and media, and

even opposition leaders, have been intimidated and coerced into collaboration or silence.

The blatantly racist and discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act is the latest manifestation of this Hindutva mindset. The declared aim of the act is to deny Muslims the same rights as other citizens of India. This is not merely an attempt to disenfranchise Indian Muslims; it is also an act of political retribution to avenge a millennium of perceived humiliation of the Hindus. The Act, among other things, violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women — no mean feat for a single piece of legislation.

Meanwhile, in Jammu and Kashmir, the Bharatiya Janata Party-RSS Government has embarked on imposing what they themselves call a final solution — a throwback, yet again, to the Nazi era. The unilateral Indian action of 5 August 2019 to revoke the autonomous status of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir is an attempt to re-engineer the demographics of the occupied territory. The will of the Kashmiri people cannot be usurped by legislative fraud. The complete lockdown of the occupied territory by India for more than 170 days now is by itself an admission that the tendentious Indian claim to Jammu and Kashmir can be maintained only through brute force and oppression. The Kashmiris have rejected it. The international community has rejected it. The international community

cannot be fooled by the guided tours conducted by the Indian Government to parts of occupied Kashmir. Instead of perpetuating the farce of supposed normalcy, they have fully exposed the extent of Indian oppression against the Kashmiri people. India's gross and systematic human rights violations in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir have also been reported and documented extensively by the international media and human rights organizations.

The reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights have documented in detail the brutal Indian tactics, including the excessive use of force, the use of pellet guns to kill and maim defenceless civilians, torture, extrajudicial killings and the arbitrary arrest of political dissidents. The central reality is the dire human rights and humanitarian situation in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the denial of the fundamental right to self-determination pledged to the Kashmiris by India, Pakistan and the international community, which is enshrined in Security Council resolutions. No amount of oppression or obfuscation by the occupying Power, India, can extinguish this inalienable right of the Kashmiri people. This is not only an imperative of justice; it is also an abiding lesson of history.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 110?

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.*