



General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

36th plenary meeting
Monday, 7 December 2020, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Bozkir (Turkey)

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

Agenda item 131

Global health and foreign policy

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/75/236 and A/75/577)

Draft resolution (A/75/L.18)

The President: In the midst of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which is radically transforming our economies and societies, the discussions and actions of the General Assembly on global health and foreign policy are of special importance. I welcomed members' participation last week in the Assembly's thirty-first special session in response to the pandemic, which was an important opportunity to renew our commitment to multilateralism and the people we serve. The issue will continue to be a priority for my presidency during the seventy-fifth session.

The past two centuries have seen enormous achievements in global health. The quality and accessibility of health services have improved. Many infectious diseases that were once leading causes of death are under control across most of the world owing to improvements in sanitation, food safety and nutrition and the introduction of new vaccines and antibiotics. But as the pandemic has demonstrated, we cannot be complacent. Just one year ago, the Assembly adopted a political declaration on universal health coverage (resolution 74/2) in a comprehensive commitment to a healthier world for all. It is time for us to match our

ambition with action with a view to improving the health and well-being of all. At least half of the world's population does not have full coverage of essential health services. More than 800 million people spend at least 10 per cent of their household budgets on health care. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the old, the poor, the displaced and other vulnerable groups that are not protected by universal health coverage have been hit the hardest. And the pandemic has proved that no one is safe unless everyone is protected.

This afternoon, the General Assembly will consider draft resolution A/75/L.18, on instituting an International Day of Epidemic Preparedness. The COVID-19 pandemic has cost around 1.5 million lives and shown the dire socioeconomic consequences that such pandemics can have. It is a wake-up call for greater political commitment and action, multilateral cooperation and health-care solidarity, which are essential to supporting global economic recovery and building back better. I call on all Member States to support the COVAX initiative and related multilateral efforts to ensure fair and equitable access to vaccines. In addition, we must work together to ensure that all necessary tools, from diagnostics to preventive equipment to treatments, are made available to all who need them. The pandemic provides a compelling case for the importance of investing in health areas right now. I encourage all countries to expand that investment with a view to achieving universal health coverage, including ensuring that tuberculosis services are supported, preparing for the worst-possible health emergencies and building the foundations for a better

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future. In that process, I also urge development partners to create incentives and support funding for universal health coverage and preparedness.

I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.18.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): On behalf of Canada, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Spain and my own country, Viet Nam, I have the honour to introduce, under agenda item 131 of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, draft resolution A/75/L.18, entitled “International Day of Epidemic Preparedness”.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has spread all over the world, with devastating effects on human lives. However, this is not the first epidemic that we have faced in recent years and it will not be the last. We have witnessed epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, Ebola, Middle East respiratory syndrome, severe acute respiratory syndrome and H1N1, among others. Other epidemics may emerge at any moment in future and surpass the intensity and gravity of previous outbreaks if we do not make preparations. In its declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1), the General Assembly points out that we should all be prepared. The pandemic caught us off guard, but it has also served as a wake-up call regarding the need to improve our preparedness.

We believe that observing an International Day of Epidemic Preparedness will be a significant way of helping to achieve that goal. It will remind all stakeholders of the impact that recent epidemics have had and of the need to maintain a permanent awareness of the importance of including epidemic prevention in all of their activities. It will also emphasize the importance of raising preparedness levels in order to ensure that the response to any epidemic that may arise is prompt and adequate. Last but not least, it will stress the importance of partnerships among all individuals, communities and States, as well as regional and international organizations, at every stage of epidemic management.

Throughout the negotiation process for this draft resolution we have sought to listen to the priorities of our fellow Member States and to reflect them in the text. We are very pleased that the draft text passed the silence procedure successfully and is now ready for consideration in plenary. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to all

delegations for their participation in the negotiations as well as those that have sponsored the draft resolution. We hope that all Member States will continue their kind support for the draft resolution by adopting it by consensus.

Mr. Othman (Malaysia): The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has brought the world to its knees in a real-life example of the butterfly effect, where small deviations can have big consequences. We have witnessed the reach of a single virus, which has claimed the lives of more than 1.4 million people around the world. It is indeed a human crisis, compounded by severe health and socioeconomic consequences.

We are often advised to think big, but sometimes we need to start by thinking small. The world is over-armed, with billions of dollars being spent on weapons, including weapons of mass destruction that could cause catastrophic harm to humans. And yet collectively we were not fully prepared to fight this invisible enemy. While the COVID-19 crisis is sending shockwaves around the globe, low-income developing countries are in a particularly difficult position when it comes to responding to the pandemic. The challenges we are confronting today are more than just about the pandemic. They are rather about the world that is coming into being as a result of our response to a global health crisis. We have seen stronger calls for a coordinated global response. At the same time, we are also threatened by the consequences of some unilateral actions.

We believe that a strong health system is crucial for Malaysia, but it is also crucial to our common global security and prosperity. It is patently obvious by now that no nation can defeat a global disease with a local response. While countries need strong public-health systems, those systems must engage, learn and cooperate with one another. On 3 December, at the thirty-first special session of the General Assembly, held in response to COVID-19, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia stated that

“our national measures must be supported by a concerted global effort. Interdependency and solidarity must be the order of the day, in the name of our joint destiny, our shared humanity and the value of our common hope.” (A/S-31/PV.2)

Malaysia, for its part, will continue to contribute actively to that endeavour. We are pleased to be the host of one of the regional hubs of the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot-World

Food Programme, which provides the international humanitarian community with supply-chain solutions, including humanitarian-relief cargo shipments in support of global COVID-19 operations. In addition, Malaysia hosts a World Health Organization (WHO) representative office, with six collaborative research centres operating in four government agencies and two public universities. Malaysia is also proud to host the WHO Global Service Centre in support of its pivotal work.

A multilateral approach and international solidarity are the only way to safeguard our common future. Malaysia continues to call for a vaccine that is accessible, equitable and affordable. We also believe that a vaccine, once developed, must promote international collaboration rather than nationalistic competition. In that context, Malaysia decided to join the COVAX Vaccine Global Access Facility to ensure that eventual vaccines reach those in greatest need, wherever they are and wherever they live.

Health issues play a crucial role in economic and social development and the conduct of our foreign policy and international relations. At the United Nations, health is an integrated element of a number of different Sustainable Development Goals. Improving health and access to health services for all has a direct impact on our ability to ensure poverty and hunger reduction, education and peaceful societies, among other things. Progress on health therefore means progress towards realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Malaysia also believes that nations need to prepare for uncertainties and equip their societies to be resilient. In that regard, the health-care system should be affordable and accessible to all. Effective universal health coverage in Malaysia was achieved in the 1990s. The Government of Malaysia provides highly subsidized health care for all residents through its extensive network of public hospitals and clinics. A comprehensive range of services is covered, including health promotion, disease prevention and curative and rehabilitative care. All residents of Malaysia are able to access those services with minimal payment, while services for disadvantaged populations, such as the poor, persons with disabilities and the elderly, are provided free of charge. That creates a strong safety net, ensuring that no one is denied access to necessary health care, regardless of ability to pay. The WHO continues to recognize that Malaysia provides quality

health-care services based on its high-performing health-care system and well-trained workforce.

The principal goal of every nation's foreign policy is to uphold national security and interests. At the same time, Malaysia believes firmly that foreign policy and international relations must be guided by the values of global solidarity, humanity and cooperation. Malaysia will continue to promote those linkages within its immediate geographical region, as well as through organizations with broader memberships such as the United Nations.

Ms. Hoe (Singapore): My delegation thanks the delegations of Viet Nam and Indonesia for their leadership in facilitating the draft resolutions entitled "International Day of Epidemic Preparedness" (A/75/L.18) and "Global health and foreign policy: strengthening health system resilience through affordable health care for all" (A/75/L.41). Singapore is pleased to be a sponsor of both resolutions, which are especially relevant and salient this year as the world continues its fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Healthy populations are an essential foundation of sustainable development and social progress. In order to ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, we need to invest in strong health systems and ensure universal access to quality health care. Addressing the world's most urgent and pressing global health challenges demands a coordinated and collective international response. A prime example of that is the COVID-19 pandemic, which is the most grievous global health crisis the world has faced in a century. Globally, there have been more than 15 million reported cases of COVID-19 and tragically, more than 1.2 million people have succumbed to the disease. The pandemic has also taken a severe toll on people's mental health and well-being and has wreaked havoc on economies across the globe. Its negative effects risk reversing hard-won development gains and hampering progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A virus knows no borders, and COVID-19 has highlighted not only the interconnectedness but also the vulnerabilities of the global community. Multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization (WHO) have a critical role to play in leading and coordinating international efforts to overcome the COVID-19 crisis. Such cooperation

will be key in developing vaccines and ensuring their fair and equitable distribution and in enhancing the international community's resilience and preparedness to cope with future pandemics. It will also play a crucial role in helping individual countries build the capacity and capability to deal with such global health emergencies and in strengthening global collaboration and support for all the countries affected.

Singapore has worked closely with other member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on a regional approach to combating the pandemic. That included establishing the ASEAN Coordinating Council working group on public health emergencies to lead the regional health response, as well as the ASEAN regional reserve of medical supplies and the ASEAN COVID-19 Response Fund to fortify the region's joint response capacity in public-health emergencies. Other frameworks under discussion, including a comprehensive recovery framework and strategic framework on public-health emergencies, will also provide guidance on recovery strategies and bolster the region's readiness to fight future pandemics.

At the international level, Singapore is working actively to support global efforts to combat the pandemic. No single country can solve all the complex challenges associated with COVID-19, including vaccine development and distribution. That is why Singapore has championed vaccine multilateralism. We have been an early supporter of the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility (COVAX). Together with Switzerland, Singapore co-chairs the Friends of COVAX informal group in support of equitable global access to a pool of safe and efficacious COVID-19 vaccines. Singapore is also honoured to represent members of the Forum of Small States on the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator Facilitation Council. This pandemic will be brought to a halt only when there is equitable access to vaccines for all people across the globe.

Singapore remains fully committed to working with all countries and stakeholders, and with the United Nations and other international organizations, including the WHO, to intensify our collective efforts to build stronger and more resilient health systems at all levels in order to tackle the immediate health security risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance our preparedness for similar public-health emergencies in future.

Mr. Pedroso Cuesta (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): In addition to its impact on the lives of millions of people, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is having serious socioeconomic consequences for all countries and is endangering achievements in sustainable development, including with regard to health. We developing countries will pay the greatest cost of the impact of the pandemic itself, in addition to the socioeconomic effects that the current unjust international order produces. There will be little progress in global health as long as a system that favours the few and dispossesses the many persists. At the same time, the urgency of addressing the impact of COVID-19 should not cause us to lose sight of the global health challenges we already face, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and non-communicable diseases, among others, which also disproportionately affect the poorest countries. It is an unsustainable paradox that our world has so much scientific development and so many economic resources and yet millions of people are dying from curable or preventable diseases. That is also a consequence of the current unjust international order.

It is alarming that some are using the context of the pandemic to resort to unilateralism. Some countries have unleashed an unbridled and irresponsible race to secure for themselves alone the means we need to confront the pandemic, and they are intensifying unilateral coercive measures that are contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights have called for such measures to be lifted in the current context because the countries affected face additional difficulties in responding to the pandemic.

In addition to COVID-19, Cuba has had to face an unprecedented intensification of the criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States for six decades and reinforced with unconventional methods of warfare, constituting a flagrant, massive and systematic violation of the human rights of the Cuban people and the main obstacle to our economic and social development. Between April 2019 and March 2020 alone, the blockade has caused losses to Cuba in excess of \$5 billion, including more than \$160 million in the health sector. The accumulated losses in this sector over the six decades of this policy already exceed \$3 billion. How much more could Cuba have done for the health of its population or in support of the efforts of other developing nations,

including in the context of COVID-19, if it had been able to count on all the resources of which it is being illegitimately deprived?

The blockade prevents Cuba from acquiring technologies, raw materials, reagents, diagnostics, medicines, devices, equipment and spare parts necessary for the better functioning of its public-health systems. Not having the right medicine or technology at the right time to save a life causes suffering and despair that can never be quantified. The genocidal nature of this policy has once again become evident in these times of pandemic. The United States has used the current context to deprive the Cuban people of mechanical ventilators, masks, diagnostic kits, protective goggles, reagents and other supplies for the management of this disease, which make the difference between life and death for patients and the health personnel caring for them. As if that were not enough, amid the current world health emergency the United States has launched a crusade, based on false and mendacious accusations, to try to discredit and hinder the international medical cooperation that Cuba provides and which constitutes a genuine example of South-South cooperation. It is thereby jeopardizing the access of millions of people around the world to quality health services. It is doing so because it cannot accept the fact that despite the blockade, Cuba has been able to send 52 medical brigades to 39 countries and territories to help fight COVID-19.

We firmly believe that the solution to today's global problems, including those related to the health of human beings, will depend on choosing multilateralism, international cooperation and solidarity in our common efforts to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and other global health challenges. The world will always be able to count on Cuba's voice and modest contribution.

Mr. Sharma (India): A healthy life is every person's basic right, and the onus is on our respective Governments to make every possible effort to ensure that right is fully protected and enjoyed by all. We thank Indonesia for putting forward this year, on behalf of seven Member States, draft resolution A/75/L.41, on strengthening health systems' resilience through affordable health care for all. We appreciate the contribution of the Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative in mobilizing political support for major public-health issues, thereby ensuring that they are high on the international agenda. We also welcome draft resolutions A/75/L.18, on the International Day

of Epidemic Preparedness, and A/75/L.47, on the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030), introduced under agenda item 131.

Health does not simply mean freedom from disease but is rather about an all-inclusive wellness. India has taken a holistic approach to this issue, based on the four main pillars of health care. The first is preventive care. We have put special emphasis on yoga, ayurveda and fitness as means of controlling lifestyle diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension and depression. In many countries, societies have reverted to healthy dietary practices that respect food diversity and include traditional and immune-boosting local foods and food grown without chemicals or pesticides. The second pillar is affordable health care. India launched its national health protection scheme in September 2018, based on a twin-focus approach, expanding access to primary health-care services to health and wellness centres and providing poor and vulnerable families with insurance coverage for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. The health and wellness centres deliver comprehensive primary health care, bringing it closer to communities, and more than 150,000 such centres are now operational. As of 4 December, 24,608 hospitals have been impanelled under the programme, more than half of them in the private sector. A total of 126 million health cards have been issued, and 14 million people have been treated under the scheme.

The other arm of the national health protection scheme is providing health-insurance cover of up to \$7,000 per family per year for secondary and tertiary hospitalization. That insurance is provided to about 100 million households, or about 500 million people, who are poor and highly vulnerable. It provides cashless, paperless access to health services for every beneficiary at designated hospitals across the country. We have opened more than 6,700 special pharmacies where vital medicines are available at affordable prices. The cost of stents for heart patients has been slashed by 80 per cent, and the cost of knee implants reduced by 50 to 70 per cent. Hundreds of thousands of kidney patients in India are also availing themselves of free dialysis services provided by the Government.

The third pillar is improvements to the supply side. We have taken several major steps to provide quality medical education and develop medical infrastructure. To improve access to tertiary care, expand medical education and increase the number of medical professions, we plan to open 157 new medical colleges.

The fourth pillar is mission mode intervention. We have introduced a national nutrition policy to improve people's nutritional status, especially for disadvantaged groups, including mothers, adolescent girls and children. For the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030 has been set as the target year for ending tuberculosis. We plan to achieve that target by 2025, five years ahead of the deadline. To reach that ambitious goal, India has started implementing a national strategic plan and has substantially increased its allocation of funds for tuberculosis control.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has highlighted systemic weaknesses in health systems and vulnerabilities in the capacity to prevent and respond to pandemic threats. We need to address the major weaknesses and gaps in order to strengthen global coordination and ensure that the world is better prepared to curb the effects of future health-related crises. We need to capitalize on existing programmes, such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator and the COVAX Vaccine Global Access Facility, in order to ensure affordable and equitable global access to diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines, while strengthening health systems. We must also come up with long-term strategies and road maps to put in place a system to deal with future pandemics. Equitable access to affordable medicines, diagnostic tools and technologies remains a concern. We must address all barriers to access to medicines and new technologies, including through the use of flexibilities provided in the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and the Doha Declaration on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Community health workers play a crucial role in covering the last mile in service delivery, and we need to strengthen their capacity.

From the early stages of the virus's spread, India has taken proactive measures that ensured that we stayed ahead of the curve. We have provided medical and other assistance to more than 150 countries to fight COVID-19. The India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund, managed by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, is working diligently in support of projects responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The motto of the Government of India, "Together, for everyone's growth, with everyone's trust", resonates with the core SDG principle of leaving no one behind. We are committed to partnering with

Member States and other stakeholders to synergize our efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and universal health coverage through the most productive, efficient and effective utilization of resources.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.18, entitled "International Day of Epidemic Preparedness". I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations already listed in document A/75/L.18, the following countries have also become sponsors: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, the Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, the Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.18?

Draft resolution A/75/L.18 was adopted (resolution 75/27).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Ms. Korac (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join the consensus on resolution 75/27 and thanks Viet Nam and the core group for their constructive engagement.

We have two small items to raise. We would like to note that the United States submitted a notice of withdrawal from the World Health Organization that will become effective on 6 July 2021. We therefore dissociate ourselves from references in the resolution to the World Health Organization and personal protective equipment, and from its paragraph 3. With regard to the resolution's references to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we addressed our concerns about this issue in a general statement on 13 November.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 131.

Agenda item 34

Prevention of armed conflict

(a) Prevention of armed conflict

Draft resolutions (A/75/L.31 and A/75/L.38/Rev.1)

The President: I would like to remind members that the debate on sub-item (a) of agenda item 34 will be scheduled during the resumed part of the session, on a date to be announced.

I now give the floor to the representative of Turkmenistan to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.31.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour of introducing draft resolution A/75/L.31, entitled "The role and importance of a policy of neutrality in maintaining and strengthening international peace, security and sustainable development". On behalf of the delegation of Turkmenistan, I would like to thank all delegations for the constructive and productive negotiations, as a result of which we were able to arrive at a substantive resolution.

Today's meeting is taking place at a very difficult time for humankind, when our world has encountered a common foe, the coronavirus disease pandemic, while armed conflicts continue around the world. In that connection, in March of this year, the Secretary-General appealed for an immediate ceasefire in every

corner of the world. Turkmenistan, along with many other countries, supported that appeal.

In introducing today's draft resolution, the Government of Turkmenistan is motivated by its belief in the policy role and importance of neutral States as a stabilizing factor in the work of strengthening international peace, security and sustainable development. Ensuring sustainable development is impossible without peace and security, and without sustainable development, peace and security come under threat. All these notions are intertwined and should be considered as a whole in the understanding that ensuring peace, fairness, inclusivity and the expansion of economic opportunity are all inherently interconnected. The political phenomenon of State neutrality and of neutral States' experience with mediation, contributing to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the prevention of conflicts, including through preventive diplomacy, can undoubtedly contribute to strengthening peace and stability and easing tensions all over the world. The draft resolution acknowledges the positive role of neutral States in providing and delivering humanitarian assistance in difficult emergency situations and in cases of natural disaster.

The draft resolution touches on the important organic connection between the economic, and specifically the geo-economic aspect, of political stability and neutrality. As practical experience has shown, responsible economic and trade investment projects are capable of calming and neutralizing acute foreign political conflicts and enabling effective measures to be taken through preventive diplomacy. Paragraph 3 of the draft resolution welcomes a decision by the Government of Turkmenistan to host an international conference on peace, security and development devoted to the International Day of Neutrality, 12 December. We have no doubt that our adoption of the draft resolution will help to expand today's understanding of the role and significance of a policy of neutrality in supporting and strengthening international peace, security and sustainable development. We would like to express our gratitude to the delegations that have sponsored the draft resolution and hope that it will be adopted by consensus, and we call on States that have not yet done so to become sponsors.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.38/Rev.1.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.38/Rev.1. This year, the text focuses on the Russian Federation's progressive militarization of the occupied territories of Ukraine, that is, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. The draft resolution addresses a matter of fundamental concern, not only for my country but for the United Nations membership at large. It is about the challenges emerging from Crimea's progressive militarization, which are undermining security and stability in the region and beyond. By occupying the peninsula and transforming it into a powerful military outpost in the region, the Russian Federation has violated fundamental norms and principles of international law, first and foremost the Charter of the United Nations.

Crimea continues to be inaccessible to any verification or inspection under the relevant international treaties. Since February 2014 the Russian Federation has significantly expanded its military presence in Crimea with land, air and naval components, endangering the security of countries far beyond the Black Sea region. Let us take a look at the current security landscape in Crimea. We see an ongoing influx of weapons and equipment capable of delivering nuclear weapons, the seizure of former nuclear-weapon storage sites, attempts by Russia to take de jure control over nuclear facilities and materials, the construction of new warships, the conduct of military exercises, the conscription of the local population into the Russian armed forces, the militarization of education and the creation of obstacles to the exercise of navigational and commercial rights and freedoms.

Just two days ago, we marked the twenty-sixth anniversary of the signing by three nuclear States, including Russia, of the Budapest Memorandum, which aimed to provide security assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. I would like to remind the Assembly that under the Budapest Memorandum, the first obligation of the three nuclear States is "to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine". The next paragraph obliges the three States

"to refrain from the threat of use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and that none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine".

Two decades later, my country had to confront an attack unleashed by a nuclear-weapon State that had signed up to the assurances of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We do not doubt that when the Russian delegation speaks today, we will hear the same narrative we have heard before, according to which Russia did not breach the Budapest Memorandum and the issue of Crimea is closed. But an issue that is such a flagrant violation of international law cannot be closed. There is no statute of limitations. That narrative is a classic manipulation of the facts by the Russian Federation, but the real facts are that Russia has brutally violated the Budapest Memorandum and that Crimea is an integral part of Ukraine temporarily occupied by an aggressor State that has subsequently tried to annex it illegally.

The General Assembly has already reconfirmed those facts in several decisions. The occupation and subsequent militarization of Crimea have led to an expansion of the area from which Russian warships and military aircraft can be deployed beyond Ukraine's borders and the Black Sea region. The aggressor State has rejuvenated its ability to project its power, which can now reach Southern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Need I remind the Assembly that the Russian Black Sea fleet, from its naval base in Crimea, has been actively involved in combat operations in Syria?

Alarmed by recent developments on the ground, Ukraine, together with the co-sponsors, has submitted an updated text of the draft resolution on the "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". This year's draft resolution contains a number of important elements, including those focusing on the illegal seizure and establishment of control over former nuclear-weapon storage sites in Crimea, the destabilizing impact on the international verification and arms-control regimes, the continued supplying of weapons, the gradual militarization of education, the illegal conscription into the Russian armed forces and the negative implications of the situation for maritime trade. The draft resolution seeks to ensure that Russia withdraws its military forces from Crimea, ends its temporary occupation of Ukraine's territory, halts its harassment of commercial vessels and lifts restrictions on international shipping in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. In other words, the resolution seeks to restore respect for legal norms, ensure the fulfilment of commitments and obligations

and prevent further violations so as to promote our common security and welfare.

Just a few minutes ago, also under agenda item 34, "Prevention of armed conflict", the Assembly recognized the role of neutrality in maintaining international peace and security. Ukraine fully shares that view. It is a fact, however, that international peace and security cannot be maintained if conflicts are fuelled and international law is violated. That is the sad reality for Ukraine, Crimea and the Black Sea region, and that is what our draft resolution is about. A vote in favour of it will signal a firm willingness to put a stop to these menacing developments for the benefit of all of us States that are neutral or aspire to neutrality, for members of alliances and for the benefit of peace. I therefore urge all Member States to vote in favour of draft resolution A/75/L.38/Rev.1, on the problem of the militarization of Crimea, in a clear demonstration of their strong commitment to the norms and principles of international law and the Charter.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/75/L.31 and A/75/L.38/Rev.1.

Delegations wishing to make a statement in explanation of position or vote on either or both of the draft resolutions are invited to do so now. Before giving the floor for explanations of position or vote, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Altarsha (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to explain its position with regard to draft resolution A/75/L.38/Rev.1, on the 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. We remain of the view that certain Member States continue to engage in negative practices that undermine our discussion of the agenda item on the prevention of armed conflict by taking an exclusionary approach. The draft resolution reflects political polarization. It only fuels conflict and dissent and is certainly not an attempt to calm the situation. The fact is that the results of the Crimea referendum have translated into stability. Based on the Charter of the United Nations and international law, we are against politicization and believe that the General Assembly should not be involved in politicized issues by overburdening its agenda with matters that do not contribute to resolving

conflicts around the world or in the region concerned. Accordingly, my delegation will vote against the draft resolution before us and urges all States to vote against it or abstain in the voting.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation has asked that the politicized draft resolution (A/75/L.38/Rev.1) submitted by Ukraine be put to a vote. We will of course vote against it, and we call on all sensible delegations to do the same.

For the third year in a row the General Assembly has been obliged to watch the performance that the Ukrainian delegation puts on merely in order to unleash another torrent of lies about what is going on in Russian Crimea and create a schism within the General Assembly. Kyiv cannot reconcile itself to the fact that the inhabitants of Crimea made a decision about their own future through the 2014 referendum, according to which Crimea and the city of Sevastopol first chose independence and then became part of the Russian Federation. That was the way that the people of the peninsula realized the right to self-determination that is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The only thing left for the Maidan authorities, who pushed Crimeans away with their acts and rhetoric of hatred, is to churn out futile, lying and feeble resolutions in impotent anger. One of them is once again before us today.

As before, no consultations on the draft text have been held. We understand our Ukrainian colleagues' reluctance to do that. It is shaming to discuss a document that is packed with lies and incapable of standing up to fact-checking. So instead of holding a discussion, they try to make Member States think that their vote will somehow affirm Ukraine's territorial integrity. Sadly, many still believe that deception.

Kyiv's absurd attempts to distort the genesis of Crimea's reunification with Russia after the Maidan coup and the current state of affairs on the peninsula were eloquently debunked by Crimeans themselves at a Security Council Arrria-formula meeting on Crimea that we convened at the end of May. We summed up its conclusions in a Security Council document (see S/2020/530), which I recommend to members if they have not seen it. Needless to say, our Ukrainian colleagues refrained from participating or from joining the dialogue with the Crimeans. It basically does not suit them to have any objective facts of any kind trickling

out of the peninsula, so they struggle to counter the information that Ukrainians have been sharing widely on social media after visiting Crimea. The Ukrainian authorities do not need the truth. They do not want to admit that if anyone is occupying Crimea, it is the Crimeans themselves alone. And as we know, it is not really possible to occupy one's own home.

Like everyone here, we feel for Ukrainians. We wish them a speedy recovery from the virus of Maidan insanity, which is a great deal more dangerous and destructive than the coronavirus. And the draft resolution they have submitted today fully reflects that madness. It is not really about Crimea but about the increasing deterioration of Ukraine, which is more and more becoming a sort of anti-Russia. Essentially, its only national strategy is blaming its neighbour for every misfortune. The Ukrainian authorities are using that strategy in their attempts to distract their people from the state that Ukraine is now in, six years after its so-called European choice. So far, unfortunately, that tactic appears to be working, thanks partly to active assistance from the Maidan's puppet masters, our American and European colleagues.

A vote in favour of this iteration of the Ukrainians' lying propaganda is merely helping to keep afloat the illusion that the path of this State to its own eventual destruction enjoys support around the world. Instead of thinking about how to save their country from complete collapse, our Ukrainian colleagues back home will be bragging about the Assembly's vote and another so-called victory over Russia. I ask members to think about that before casting their ballots.

Today's vote will have no effect whatever on the Crimeans' decision. They will merely be convinced once again as to the correctness of their 2014 decision to reunite with Russia. And the sooner Ukraine acknowledges the futility of its attempts to return the Crimeans against their will, the better off it will be.

Ms. Ahmadova (Azerbaijan): We have asked to speak in connection with draft resolution A/75/L.38/Rev.1.

The United Nations is a critical pillar of multilateralism and plays a central role in ensuring that everyone involved in addressing peace and security concerns upholds the purposes and principles of the Organization. Support for that role and for safeguarding the collective security, political and humanitarian mechanisms of the United Nations is

crucial to maintaining peace, stability and sustainable development. Coherent global responses and common efforts, with the United Nations at their core, are the most effective ways to address conflicts, fight climate change and global terrorism, manage forced displacements and migratory flows and achieve the goals of peace, inclusive sustainable development and human rights for all.

Azerbaijan voted in favour of the adoption on 27 March 2014 of resolution 68/262, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine", and our position in support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders remains unchanged. In situations of international disputes, armed conflicts or political crises involving relations between States, no solution is acceptable that is inconsistent with international law, particularly where fundamental norms such as those relating to the obligation of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States are concerned. Strict compliance with those norms, their universal application and the fulfilment in good faith of the obligations assumed by States is vital to the maintenance of international peace and security.

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

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/75/L.31 and A/75/L.38/Rev.1.

Draft resolution A/75/L.31 is entitled "The role and importance of a policy of neutrality in maintaining and strengthening international peace, security and sustainable development".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations already listed in document A/75/L.31, the following countries have also become sponsors: Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Bahrain, China, Cuba, Djibouti, the Gambia, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation, the Sudan, Suriname, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Togo, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.31?

Draft resolution A/75/L.31 was adopted (resolution 75/28).

The President: Draft resolution A/75/L.38/Rev.1 is 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 would like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations already listed in document A/75/L.38/Rev.1, the following countries have also become sponsors: Greece, Liechtenstein, the Marshall Islands, Montenegro and New Zealand.

The President: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States

Against:

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

Abstaining:

Algeria, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Togo, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen

Draft resolution A/75/L.38/Rev.1 was adopted by 63 votes to 17, with 62 abstentions (resolution 75/29).

The President: Before giving the floor for explanations of vote after the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Hermann (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the eight Nordic and Baltic countries — Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms the illegal annexation of Crimea and the Russian Federation’s ongoing violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Our policy of non-recognition remains firm. We are deeply concerned about the increased militarization of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation, particularly the transfers of highly destabilizing weapon systems and military personnel to Crimea. We urge the Russian Federation to stop such activity, which has worsened the security situation in the Black Sea region. We are equally concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in Crimea, which especially targets Crimean Tatars. We also condemn forced conscriptions, which run counter to international law. There is an urgent need to allow access to Crimea for human rights monitoring mechanisms of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. As we have stated on numerous occasions, Russia must withdraw its military forces from Crimea and end its illegal annexation of Crimea without delay.

We will never accept any State's attempt to change another State's borders by force. That is at the heart of the rules-based international order and crucial to ensuring international peace and security.

Ms. Zahedi (United Kingdom): I am taking the floor to reaffirm the United Kingdom's full support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in March 2014 was a flagrant violation of Russia's international commitments and a direct challenge to the rules-based international order. Russia's actions remain a direct challenge to international security, with grave implications for the international legal order that protects the unity and sovereignty of all States.

The United Kingdom condemns that violation of international law, and we reiterate that we do not and will not recognize Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula. Crimea remains an integral part of Ukraine, and we are deeply concerned about Russia's continued destabilizing actions on the peninsula, which also pose a threat to the entire international community. The militarization of Crimea includes the transfer of weapon systems, including nuclear-capable aircraft missiles, weapons, ammunition and military personnel, by the Russian Federation into the territory of Ukraine; the Black Sea fleet's strengthening of its coastal missile brigades with Bal and Bastion systems capable of destroying targets at sea and on land, which is a concern for all countries in the Black Sea region; the conscription of Crimean residents into the Russian armed forces, including assignment to military bases in the Russian Federation; and Russian education policies in Crimea, which aim to indoctrinate children into joining the Russian military forces.

Let us also not forget that in November 2018, Russian naval officers and border guards forcibly seized three Ukrainian vessels in the Black Sea and detained 24 Ukrainian servicemen. The Russian authorities admitted to using force to seize the three Ukrainian naval vessels. They also acknowledged opening fire during the incident, seriously injuring several Ukrainian servicemen. Russia continues to display a total disregard for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It instigated and continues to fuel the conflict through support to the Russian-backed armed forces in eastern Ukraine. We must stand together and respond robustly to such actions. The adoption of resolution 75/29 today sends a strong signal to Russia that its

illegal behaviour and attempts to integrate Crimea into Russia are unacceptable.

Ms. Tang (Singapore): I am taking the floor to explain my delegation's vote on resolution 75/29, which was just adopted. As a small country, Singapore is deeply committed to multilateralism and respect for international law. We have always supported the principles of respect for territorial integrity, non-interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign State, respect for sovereignty and the rule of law. We have also taken a consistent position in opposing the annexation of any country or territory as a clear violation of the principles of international law. Singapore notes that several changes and additions were made to the text of the resolution we have just adopted. We would have preferred a more succinct resolution, focused on the principles of international law. While we continue to have concerns about some of the language used in the resolution, Singapore supported it as a matter of principle, because it relates fundamentally to the principles of 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 in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I am taking the floor to deliver a general statement on behalf of the United States. The United States would like to thank the facilitator for her efforts on resolution 75/29 and Ukraine for its leadership on this important issue.

Nearly seven years into its occupation of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula, Russia's increasing militarization of Crimea poses a serious and growing threat to our common security. As today's resolution affirms our joint support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of continued Russian aggression, the United States has sponsored it. The United States does not and will not ever recognize Russia's purported annexation of Crimea. Crimea is Ukraine.

Mr. Tozik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus has consistently taken the position that it is unacceptable to introduce country-specific resolutions in the General Assembly that are designed exclusively as an instrument of political accusation. Their adoption only strengthens confrontation and in no way contributes to resolving specific disputes. Resolution 75/29, presented today, is one-sided, politicized and very selective about the range of destabilizing factors in the region. That

inflames mutual recriminations and makes it more difficult to find peaceful solutions to the situation. The resolution lacks any reference to the Minsk agreements, which in our view should be essential, and there were no expert consultations on the document. We believe that dialogue and mutual respect are the main preconditions in maintaining regional stability. The Republic of Belarus has always participated in the process aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement in south-east Ukraine. We have made significant contributions to the holding of meetings of the contact group on Ukraine and its working subgroup in Minsk. Belarus intends to continue contributing to the dialogue in any way possible and stands ready to continue ensuring conditions for negotiations on the Minsk platform on any level and in any format.

Mr. Situmorang (Indonesia): I would like to begin by reaffirming Indonesia's consistent position of upholding and respecting the principles of non-interference, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries within their internationally recognized borders, including Ukraine. Indonesia is therefore opposed to any action aimed at annexing or illegally occupying the territory of any sovereign country or territory that would contravene the principles of the Charter of the United Nations or international law.

With regard to the current situation in Crimea, Indonesia stresses the importance of dialogue and diplomacy among the States concerned in order to resolve the ongoing problems in Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. In that connection, we abstained in the voting on resolution 75/29, as we are aware of the view that some of its elements may further exacerbate tension among the parties concerned and harm the environment for political dialogue. Finally, Indonesia encourages the States concerned to take the necessary measures to de-escalate tensions in order to open the way for negotiations. In addition, we call on the international community to support the diplomatic efforts of all the relevant parties towards the political settlement of this particular issue.

Mr. Sahraei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have asked for the floor to explain my delegation's position on resolution 75/29, 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".

Based on its principled position, the Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that a General Assembly resolution should address an international situation while taking into account the purview and jurisdiction of each of the main bodies of that organ, in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We strongly oppose the politicization of United Nations mechanisms and the unconstructive interference of third parties in bilateral issues. Any attempt in that direction would undermine the credibility of the United Nations system, and my delegation would not support such an approach. We firmly believe that debates on multifaceted issues of a highly political and controversial nature within the setting of the General Assembly cannot be helpful in furthering efforts to achieve a workable solution to an issue on which agreements were reached in Minsk in 2015 that were endorsed in Security Council resolution 2202 (2015). While there is an accurate international mechanism in place that is supported by the Security Council, referring the issue to the General Assembly could bring out existing differences and sow division among Member States rather than achieving a solution.

Once again, my delegation emphasizes the importance of dialogue and diplomacy between the States concerned and strongly supports achieving a peaceful solution to the ongoing problem. We believe that any attempt outside the aforementioned agreed framework will not lead to a tangible or durable solution unless endorsed by both States concerned.

Mr. Khaldi (Algeria): My delegation has asked for the floor to explain its vote on resolution 75/29 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 Algerian delegation has abstained in the voting on the resolution on this topic for the third consecutive year, in view of the fact that the resolution remains unbalanced. We regret that no consultations were held with Member States in order to achieve more consensual language and address the issues of concern in a more comprehensive and transparent manner. In our view, the adoption of a divisive resolution containing controversial elements undermines the international efforts to resolve this conflict peacefully in the internationally agreed format. Furthermore, seeking a solution outside that format might further exacerbate tensions in the region and jeopardize the prospects for a political solution to the issue. In conclusion, I would

like to reiterate Algeria's strong commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and multilateralism, as well as to the peaceful settlement of conflict through direct dialogue and negotiations.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

I call on the representative of the Russian Federation, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Needless to say, we deplore the vote that was just held on resolution 75/29, submitted by Ukraine. The issue is not about the content of this absurd and deceitful resolution. As I explained in my statement before the vote, whether the resolution was adopted or not was not going to influence the Crimeans' position or the status of the peninsula in any way. We are merely disappointed that the Ukrainian Maidan regime will get yet another propaganda tool that it will not hesitate to use to further hoodwink its own population, contrary to logic, arithmetic and common sense. And the General Assembly, willingly or not, has become implicated in that process. This situation can only raise concerns.

Since everything suggests that the Ukrainian leadership is not prepared to refrain from the practice of submitting absurd drafts that bear no relation to reality, we urge the Assembly to cast aside political considerations and to think about the ordinary Ukrainians whom the noisy, frenzied Maidan minority continues to force down a devastating social, economic and political path with the support of our Western colleagues.

The Assembly may think that I am exaggerating, spreading Russian propaganda, slandering a young democracy that is battling a mythical Russian aggression. Far from it. The Maidan insanity that its Western sponsors unleashed in 2014, like a genie from a bottle and for their own geopolitical purposes, refuses to subside, because the necessary sobering signals from outside have not reached it, largely thanks to those same geopolitics. That suits the Western countries, which care nothing for Ukrainians' lives or future. That is why they are also willing to keep alive the Maidan fever that is so ruinous for Ukraine through gestures such as their support for today's resolution. It is like encouraging drug addicts with extra doses instead of persuading them to get treatment.

We in Russia know just how serious this Ukrainian illness has become since the Maidan virus struck, because we have always preserved friendly and kindred ties with ordinary Ukrainians that the Maidan regime has failed to sever for the past almost seven years despite all its efforts. Indeed, the Assembly was able to see for itself how far the disease has progressed in the statement that the Permanent Representative of Ukraine, Sergiy Kyslytsya, made a week ago at the meeting commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War (see A/75/PV.33). Permanent Representative Kyslytsya made an intervention there that gave a distorted interpretation of the origins and conduct of the war and was deeply shocking not only to Russians but to Ukrainians and every country of the former Soviet Union. No one of common sense or even a modicum of understanding of history could remain indifferent to something arousing such feelings of disgust and repugnance. It was truly painful to hear such things from the representative of a country that is one of the heirs of the victorious Soviet people.

Incidentally, since Ambassador Kyslytsya spoke after us and we did not have an opportunity to reply to him and did not want to cloud a celebratory occasion, we would now like to take this opportunity to apologize. Not to Ambassador Kyslytsya, of course, but to those to whom he offended in his speech — the Ukrainian veterans who shed their blood in the ranks of the Red Army for freedom and the right to life of their people, whom Hitler wanted to enslave and wipe off the face of the earth along with every other Slavic people. Considering that the war spared not a single Soviet family, that may include Ambassador Kyslytsya's own family and the families of the Ukrainian leaders who continue to inflame the Maidan lawlessness. But that is up to their conscience. I also want to apologize to the hundreds of thousands of Jews, Poles, Russians and Ukrainians slaughtered by the Nazis and their Ukrainian nationalist henchmen, who are considered heroes in Maidan Ukraine today, and to the veterans from the United States, Great Britain, France and other countries for the fact that Ambassador Kyslytsya, speaking on the seventy-fifth anniversary of victory, equated their fellow soldiers from the Soviet Union — alongside whom, at the cost of millions of lives, they broke the backbone of Hitler's forces and stopped the fascist plague — with Nazis. And I apologize for the fact that such words of blasphemy and sacrilege were uttered within the sacred walls of the General Assembly of the

United Nations, an organization that owes its founding to the victory of humankind over fascism.

We do not know if he will apologize himself someday. But as long as the General Assembly continues to adopt phantasmagorical resolutions such as today's at the initiative of the Maidan authorities, that moment is still a long way off. I would like to ask my colleagues to think about that next time Ambassador Kyslytsya asks them to support another such deceitful, anti-Russian resolution — and considering its consequences, anti-Ukrainian as well — with no relation to reality.

The President: I call on the representative of Ukraine, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I regret to have to say that the Russian representative has shown once again that the Russians do not give a monkey's about the rules in this house and that his statement actually had nothing to do with a point of order. It is regrettable that the Russian delegation has once again misused the Assembly to make what seems to be a substantive statement. I would say, however, that I take criticism from Russia's representatives as a badge of honour that merely assures me that I am doing the right thing. For the benefit of the Russian representative, I would now like to switch to Russian.

(spoke in Russian)

I think it is essential to remind the Russian delegation that 11 years ago, Vladimir Putin condemned the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, calling it, in his own words, amoral and a deal with the Nazis. I regret that the Russian delegation has not complied with the exhortation of its current President, then Prime Minister, who at a ceremony in Poland demanded that other countries "condemn the Pact at the level of political decisions". The Russian delegation's inconsistency with regard to the Hitler-Stalin Pact and its delegation's refusal to condemn and recognize it as a deal made with the Nazis — as Vladimir Putin said — therefore simply confirm Moscow's retreat from democratic values and of historical facts that Vladimir Putin acknowledged and called on others to acknowledge quite recently.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union to make a statement after the vote.

Mr. Gonzato (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, North

Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania; the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union does not and will not recognize the Russian Federation's illegal annexation of Ukraine's Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. The European Union remains steadfast in its commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Russia's actions are in blatant breach of international law and key principles of international order. They are a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits the use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of any State. Moreover, they violate Russia's international and bilateral commitments and the principles of regional European security and stability, enshrined in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe — the foundations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) — and the Budapest Memorandum of 1994. As stated in resolution 68/262, supported by an overwhelming majority of the General Assembly, the so-called referendum organized by Russia on the peninsula in March 2014 had no legal validity and was a breach of Ukraine's Constitution, and therefore could not form a basis for the alteration of the status of Crimea and Sevastopol. The European Union calls on all States Members of the United Nations to remain steadfast in their policy of non-recognition of Russia's illegal annexation, in line with resolution 68/262.

Since the illegal annexation, Russia's militarization of the peninsula has had a negative impact on the security situation in the Black Sea region as a whole. The building of a bridge over the Kerch Strait without Ukraine's consent and the subsequent arbitrary inspection regime instituted at the Kerch Strait limit navigation to and from Ukrainian ports, as well as to third countries, with negative economic consequences for Ukraine's economy. We are seriously concerned about the Russian Federation's transfers of highly destabilizing weapon systems to Crimea and military personnel to the territory of Ukraine. The Russian armed forces have held multiple military exercises in Crimea that undermine regional security and will

have considerable long-term negative environmental consequences in the region. As documented in the relevant reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Russian citizenship and compulsory conscription in Russia's armed forces have been imposed on Crimean residents, which is a breach of international humanitarian law.

As the EU has repeatedly called for, and as was also stated in resolution 74/17 of December 2019, it is crucial that Russia withdraw its military forces from Crimea and end its illegal annexation of Crimea without delay. We call on all Member States to cooperate with the United Nations in order to encourage and support efforts to that end, and to refrain from any dealings with the Russian Federation regarding Crimea that are inconsistent with that aim or could be seen as an implicit recognition of this violation of international law. In that regard, we urge the Russian Federation to ensure safe, secure, unconditional and unimpeded access to the illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol for all international monitoring mechanisms, including the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

The European Union remains committed to fully implementing its policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, which is based on the obligation to refrain from recognizing as lawful a situation created by a serious breach of international law, including through sanctions.

The President: I call on the representative of the Russian Federation, who has asked to speak in right of reply.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will be brief, Mr. President. Judging by everything he has said, Ambassador Kyslytsya is intent on insulting his compatriots and the people of the entire former Soviet Union with his false interpretation of history. Our opinion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact has not changed, and there is no need for the Ambassador to say things here that are not true. But we consider the Pact solely as a historical event, the last in a series of agreements that various States were forced to make with Hitler. The Ambassador is well aware of our position. His statement was not about the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, but about equating the so-called Soviet occupation with the Nazi occupation in terms of consequences, the number of victims, the damage to cities' infrastructure and so forth. Therein lies the blasphemy. He is trying to promote views in the General Assembly that leave even ordinary Ukrainians dumbfounded. That is what is deplorable, and that is why I urge him to end this discussion, which may save him from leaving an even deeper mark on history that he will most likely regret one day.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 34.

The meeting rose at 11:35 a.m.