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Seventy-sixth session

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Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

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

Agenda item 142 (continued)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/76/636, A/76/636/Add.1 and A/76/636/Add.2)

The President: I would like, in keeping with established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/76/636, A/76/636/Add.1 and A/76/636/Add.2. Document A/76/636 contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly of Member States in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

“A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member.”

In documents A/76/636/Add.1 and A/76/636/Add.2, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of

his communication contained in document A/76/636, Antigua and Barbuda and the Sudan have made the payment necessary to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. I would like to further inform Members that since the issuance of document A/76/636/Add.2, the Congo has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. This information will be reflected in document A/76/636/Add.3, to be issued.

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in these documents?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 12 (continued)

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

Solemn appeal made by the President of the General Assembly (A/76/648)

The President: I have the honour to make the following solemn appeal in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce.

“The ancient Greek tradition of the *ekecheiria*, or ‘Olympic Truce’, born in the eighth century B.C., serves as a hallowed principle of the Olympic Games. In 1992, the International Olympic Committee renewed this tradition by calling upon all nations to observe the Truce.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

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“Through its resolution 48/11, of 25 October 1993, the General Assembly urged Member States to observe the Olympic Truce from the seventh day before the opening to the seventh day following the closing of each Olympic Games. This appeal was renewed in the Millennium Declaration.

“In the 2005 World Summit Outcome, our leaders emphasized that ‘sports can foster peace and development’, and encouraged the General Assembly to foster a dialogue and agreed proposals for a plan of action on sport and development.

“On 3 November 2005, the General Assembly held a plenary debate on the agenda item entitled ‘Sport for peace and development’, and also adopted, with universal support, resolution 60/8, entitled ‘Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic Ideal’, deciding to consider this item every two years in advance of each Summer and Winter Olympic Games.

“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges sport as an important enabler of sustainable development, recognizing the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contribution that it makes to the Sustainable Development Goals, including the empowerment of women and young people, individuals and communities, as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.

“To this end, on 2 December 2021, the General Assembly adopted resolution 76/13. In that resolution, the Assembly urged Member States to observe the Olympic Truce individually and collectively, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, throughout the period from the seventh day before the start of the XXIV Winter Olympic Games until the seventh day following the end of the XIII Paralympic Winter Games, to be held in Beijing in 2022.

“The Olympic movement aspires to contribute to a peaceful future for all humankind through the educational value of sport, in particular youth. The Games will bring together athletes from all parts of the world in the greatest of international sport events as a means to promote peace, mutual understanding and goodwill among nations and peoples — goals that are also part of the founding values of the United Nations.

“As an expression of these common objectives, the International Olympic Committee has decided to fly the United Nations flag in the Olympic stadium and the Olympic villages. The United Nations system and the International Olympic Committee have strengthened their mutual cooperation and support through joint endeavours in such fields as human development, poverty alleviation, humanitarian assistance, health promotion, HIV and AIDS prevention, child and youth education, gender equality, peacebuilding and sustainable development.

“I welcome the leadership of Olympic and Paralympic athletes in promoting peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic ideal, and the commitment made by various States Members of the United Nations to developing national and international programmes that promote peace and conflict resolution and the Olympic and Paralympic values through sport and through culture, education and sustainable development.

“As President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, I solemnly appeal to all Member States to demonstrate their commitment to the Olympic Truce for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Beijing 2022 and to undertake concrete actions at the local, national, regional and world levels to promote and strengthen a culture of peace and harmony based on the spirit of the Olympic Truce.

“Referring to the original tradition of the Olympic Truce practiced in ancient times, as described in resolution 76/13, I also call upon all warring parties of current armed conflicts around the world to boldly agree to true mutual ceasefires for the duration of the Olympic Truce, thereby providing an opportunity to settle disputes peacefully.”

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the solemn appeal in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 12?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 16 *(continued)***Culture of peace****Draft resolution (A/76/L.30)**

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel to introduce draft resolution A/76/L.30, which was submitted by Israel together with Germany.

Mr. Erdan (Israel): Chaim lived in a small village in Transylvania with his wife, Bracha, and eight beautiful children. They lived simply; after all, what more do you need than a loving family and a tight-knit community? Everyone in the village knew Chaim. He was a farmer, and he was so strong that whenever a wagon would get stuck in the mud in the winter, people would ask for his help to pull it out with his bare hands.

But in the spring of 1944, the small village and their simple way of life ceased to exist. The Nazis brutally forced Chaim, Bracha, his wife, their eight children and 160,000 other Transylvanian Jews into cramped ghettos. But before anyone could get settled, they were all packed tightly into cattle cars, with barely enough space to breathe. And then, when the trains finally came to a stop, Chaim and his family were met by shouting soldiers and barking dogs. “Raus! Raus!”, they yelled — “Out! Out!”

Immediately upon arrival, Chaim was separated from his family, his young children, his babies torn from his arms and his sweet Bracha dragged away from him. If only he had known what was about to happen to them, he would have kissed each one of them and told them how much he loved them. But how could he have known? How could he, who could have imagined that such evil existed? Bracha and seven of their children were sent straight to the gas chambers. Innocent children, Chaim’s sweet, innocent children, choking to death on a gas used to kill insects and rats. It was over in minutes, their young lives extinguished forever.

The Nazis kept Chaim alive temporarily for the sole purpose of doing back-breaking labour for their despicable regime. But Bracha and her children were eight victims out of 6 million other Jewish men, women and children murdered throughout the Holocaust in the most horrific ways imaginable. How do we know this? How do we know about the sheer magnitude of the atrocities, the incomprehensible numbers, the systematic genocide aiming to wipe out an entire people?

While the survivors and their liberators have spent years telling their stories, the Nazis left their own irrefutable proof. The Nazis took so much pride in their well-oiled killing machine that they made the effort, at least at the beginning of the war, to keep careful records of their crimes, making the Holocaust the most meticulously documented genocide in history.

Nevertheless, we now live in an era in which fiction is becoming fact as the Holocaust becomes a distant memory. And as this happens following the greatest crime in human history, now comes the greatest cover-up in human history. As the number of Holocaust survivors diminishes, Holocaust denial is growing at a terrifying speed. But this is not a new phenomenon. Within mere decades of the Holocaust, perverse publications were already labelling the Holocaust a fabrication — the 6 million swindle, the hoax of the twentieth century and the drama of European Jewry, to name just a few.

The Holocaust was still a gaping wound for humankind, and already claims were being made that it was all a lie. But how can you refute the irrefutable? The gas chambers still stand. The footage of Einsatzgruppen killing squads murdering thousands remains archived. The testimonials of so many survivors have been recorded.

In the face of such clear evidence, Holocaust denial evolved and changed its form. It is said that a lie that is a half-truth is the blackest of lies, and so Holocaust denial became Holocaust distortion. Millions died, yes, but 6 million? People were killed, but systematic genocide? Concentration camps existed, but gas chambers? The Jews were targeted, but were they not to blame?

While those distortions and lies differ from denial, they both stem from the same source of bigotry, hatred and vehement anti-Semitism. This newer form of fabrication and Jew hatred is not spread only by extremists and fringe groups. Nations with seats in this Hall openly deny the Holocaust, casting doubt on its occurrence and praising its perpetrators. Some have even run cartoon contests seeking the best cartoon mocking the Holocaust. In fact, those that most blatantly deny that Jews suffered a genocide are the ones now threatening Jews with another genocide.

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s chief propagandist, once said, if you tell a big lie enough times, people will eventually come to believe it. Today this pandemic of distortions and lies uses social media to spread across

the globe in the blink of an eye. Countless Facebook groups are dedicated to debunking the Holocaust. The hashtag #HoloHoax unashamedly trends on Twitter. Tik-Tok videos mocking victims of the Holocaust are growing in popularity. YouTubers claiming that stories about crematoria are fabricated have terrifying followings. Those posts, tweets and videos are viewed hundreds of thousands of times, and their impact is difficult to comprehend.

Only 54 per cent of the world's population has heard of the Holocaust, with a third of those sceptical of the facts. Some of them believe that the deaths have been exaggerated, while others believe that the Holocaust is a complete myth. Listen to this shocking fact: only a third of young Europeans, the people living on the continent where this unimaginable evil occurred, can explain what the Holocaust means, what the Holocaust is. If this is the state of the world at a time when Holocaust survivors are still with us, what does the future hold?

As the number of survivors dwindles, the younger generations are being indoctrinated on social media to doubt reality and trust deception. And as the Internet turns into a vile breeding ground of deceit, social media platforms are shirking their responsibility. Despite their importance, those platforms do little to combat this sick phenomenon. And as this darkness grows, they place the blame elsewhere. "It's not our responsibility; we are only service providers", we hear from media executives.

We recognize those words. We have heard them before. As responsibility is dodged, evil grows. When there is no accountability, evil triumphs. Social media giants can no longer remain complacent in the face of the hate spread through their platforms.

Beyond defining Holocaust distortion and denial, draft resolution A/76/L.30 is a commitment to ensuring that this phenomenon will be tolerated no more. As Israel's ambassador, this draft resolution is my most important initiative, not only because I represent the Jewish State, not only because I am a Jew, but because I am the grandson of Holocaust survivors.

Chaim, a farmer who lived in a small village in Transylvania, a man who pulled wagons from the mud with his bare hands, a man whose wife and children were torn from his arms and murdered in the gas chambers, was my grandfather. It was my family that was exterminated on that terrible day.

My grandfather Chaim was never able to share with us what he went through in Auschwitz. Every time he began to speak about his experience, he would break down in tears. For me, the Holocaust is the story of my family, and it is my personal duty to share this story with the world.

We have with us in this Hall today guests of honour. Holocaust survivors Toby, Sammy, Hilda, Norbert and Rena have joined us for this historic occasion. Each one of them has an inspiring story of survival to tell — an inspiring story of how, in the face of all odds, they are in this Hall with us today to share their experience.

In addition to these survivors, Dr. Albert Bourla, Chief Executive Officer of Pfizer, Inc. has also joined us. Dr. Bourla, the man behind the miracle vaccine, is the child of Holocaust survivors whose survival was also a miracle. Just imagine how the world would look today if history had played out differently for the Bourla family. Now try to imagine how different the world would look today if the 6 million had survived.

Our guests are in this Hall to be witnesses to the moment that we commit ourselves to commemorating their stories while combating the attempts to erase them. They understand better than all of us that sharing their stories and the stories of their families not only honours the memory of the victims, but also ensures that history will never repeat itself.

To these survivors, I say: No one will erase our stories. No one will erase our past. No one will distort our history. I will never let this happen. We will never let this happen.

This moment is our pledge to these survivors that the atrocities of the Holocaust will never be forgotten, and the facts will no longer be distorted. This Organization was founded in the wake of the greatest crime ever perpetrated. It was founded upon the ethos of "never again", and its very essence was to prevent such atrocities from ever being repeated — against us, the Jews, or against anyone else.

Holocaust denial has spread like a cancer. It has spread under our watch. It has spread because people have chosen to be irresponsible and to avoid accountability. The time has come for this Organization to return to its roots. The time has come for all of us to right a historic wrong.

Israel, the Jewish State, is proud to have led and facilitated such a crucial draft resolution, and I would

like to thank my friend, Ambassador Antje Leendertse, the Permanent Representative of Germany, as well as the German Government, for co-facilitating it with us.

One of our core values as Jews is to heal a fractured world, and I urge everyone in this Hall today to join us in doing that. I thank the more than 100 sponsors, and I implore those who have not yet co-sponsored the draft to follow suit.

When Nazi mass murderer Adolf Eichmann stood on trial in Israel, the Attorney General opened the prosecution with these moving words:

“When I stand before you here... I am not standing alone. With me are 6 million accusers. But they cannot rise to their feet and point an accusing finger.”

I too stand in this Hall today with 6 million accusers. Yet while this draft resolution preserves the memory of the 6 million victims of the past, its goal is also to protect the victims of the future.

Today marks 80 years since the infamous Wannsee Conference, the meeting at which 15 high-ranking Nazi officials were presented with the final solution — the plan to exterminate the Jewish people. No day is more fitting for the United Nations General Assembly to show its unanimous support for such an apt draft resolution. Our fight to ensure the memory of the victims whose fates were sealed 80 years ago is a fight that must be fought as a united body. After all, being vigilant about history today helps prevent the tragedies of tomorrow.

I thank the Assembly from the bottom of my heart.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/76/L.30.

Before giving the floor for explanations of position, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Takht Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to explain my delegation’s position regarding document A/76/L.30. We strongly reject the deceitful attempt by the Israeli regime, the main sponsor of draft resolution, to misuse the concepts affiliated with agenda item 16, “Culture of peace”.

The fires of the Second World War, which brought untold sorrow to humankind, were spread through two main drivers: racism and expansionism. These sinister

intentions have still continued in felon minds. Most notably, the Israeli regime is the symbol of both those dreadful motives and has applied them in its policies and practices for well over seven decades, and it continues to do so now.

Resolution 34/103, adopted 14 December 1979, “[r]esolutely condemns imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, racism including Zionism”. Also, in its resolution 3151 (XXVIII) of 14 December 1973, the Assembly condemned, inter alia, the unholy alliance between the racism of the former South Africa and Zionism. Furthermore, the Political Declaration and Strategy to Strengthen International Peace and Security and to Intensify Solidarity and Mutual Assistance among Non-Aligned Countries, adopted on 30 August 1975, severely condemned Zionism as a threat to world peace and security and called upon all countries to oppose this racist and imperialist ideology.

The Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace, endorsed by the International Women’s Year Conference in 1975 also called for “the elimination of colonialism and neo-colonialism, foreign occupation, Zionism, apartheid and racial discrimination in all its forms ...”.

Despite these outstanding calls by the international community, the Israeli regime, with its racist and expansionist ideology, policies and practices, has remained the only apartheid regime in the world. The draft resolution before us does nothing to promote the culture of peace. Indeed, the main drivers of the Israeli regime presenting this draft resolution are its usual racist beliefs and mischievous intentions to pursue its expansionist interests through all means.

That regime has routinely attempted to exploit the past suffering of Jewish people as a cover for the crimes it has perpetrated over the past seven decades against the countries of the region, including all of its neighbours, without exception. So far, it has committed all four core international crimes and, on certain occasions, it has committed them simultaneously. Its brutal crimes against the Palestinians include massacre, assassination, ethnic cleansing, collective punishment, inhumane blockade, demolition of houses and forced eviction, and they continue.

During the Second World War, my country hosted many refugees from certain European countries. My Government has continuously condemned genocide,

including on racial, ethnic or religious grounds, as a crime against humanity. In our view, there is no justification for genocide of any kind and under any circumstances. Nor can there be any justification for policies or practices, like those undertaken by the Israeli regime, to exploit past crimes as a pretext to commit or justify new genocides or crimes. The occupation of Palestine and parts of Syria and Lebanon, as well as the continued grave systematic violation of the human rights of the Palestinians, including their inherent right to self-determination and to establish an independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, constitute a crime against humanity and cannot be justified in any way. Rather, the Israeli regime and all its officials are responsible for such crimes, and the perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable and brought to justice.

The international community should take strong action against the regime's crimes and not allow it to pursue its illegitimate goals by manipulating humanitarian sentiments.

Moreover, the text before us proposes an awkward approach to historical studies. Many heinous cases of genocide throughout history, including in the course of the Second World War, require a thorough and comprehensive examination in order to prevent their recurrence. Imposing an obstructive approach on such an examination will certainly not serve that purpose. Undoubtedly, addressing such historical events requires a proportionate degree of research, scrutiny and rigour. The seriousness and sincerity of that endeavour will indeed be undermined by rendering political judgments on such events and prohibiting any inquiry on their characteristics, scope and extent.

For the reasons elaborated above, my delegation fully dissociates itself from draft resolution L.30 in its entirety, including the definitions contained therein, and notes that this text should not be considered or quoted in future as a consensus-based text.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the delegation of Israel for having taken the initiative to draft and adopt a resolution against Holocaust denial, which we wholeheartedly support. Germany participated as the facilitator of the negotiation process, and this is a very significant and welcome development.

The mass murder of Jews, known in history as the Holocaust, was one of the most tragic events of the

Second World War. It encompasses a range of crimes that defy comprehension, perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its allies from a number of European countries.

The draft resolution (A/76/L.30) being adopted today is important in systematizing the work being done by United Nations Member States to keep alive the memory of the Holocaust and all the victims of the Nazis. The document also contributes to efforts to counter attempts to falsify the history of the Second World War, and it recalls that on 20 January 1942, representatives of the Nazi party and other high-ranking German officials met at a conference in Wannsee to discuss their inhuman designs. At the same time, Nazi Germany launched a new offensive in the immediate vicinity of Moscow, near the town of Rzhev. In months of bloody fighting, 1.3 million people in the Red Army were either killed and wounded, and in the whole war with Nazi Germany, the Soviet nation lost 27 million of its citizens.

The memory of the victims of the Second World War and the victory over a common enemy is sacred for us. That is why we will never accept attempts to falsify and distort the truth about the Second World War and the alliance between countries that fought against Hitler. We will not allow the desecration of memorials to liberating soldiers, nor will we allow the glorification of Nazism or the proliferation of neo-Nazism. Such actions are a threat to peace and humanity.

We consider it fundamentally important to reveal the truth about the victims of the Holocaust, the genocide of the Soviet people and other crimes of Nazi Germany and its allies. Russia, Israel, Germany and other countries and authoritative non-governmental organizations are doing a great deal of work in this area.

Soviet soldiers stood firm in this war. They won, among other things, to ensure that the plans outlined at Wannsee could never again come to pass.

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

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/76/L.30, entitled "Holocaust denial". I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of

draft resolution A/76/L.30: Andorra, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Eswatini, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, the Federated States of Micronesia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, Paraguay, the Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Uganda and Vanuatu.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/76/L.30?

Draft resolution A/76/L.30 was adopted (resolution 76/250).

The President: We will now hear statements after the adoption of the resolution.

Ms. Leendertse (Germany): Eighty years ago, senior Nazi officials gathered in Berlin, the capital of Germany, to plan the implementation of the Holocaust, the worst crime in human history. The so-called Wannsee Conference led to the systematic establishment of death camps and, ultimately, war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Nearly 6 million Jews were murdered, 1.5 million of them children, alongside a large number of persons belonging to other minorities and target groups of the Nazi ideology.

Today, the General Assembly is sending a strong and unambiguous message against the denial or the distortion of these historical facts. I am pleased that the entire membership is united in sending this important message — together and with one voice.

I would like to thank Israel for its trusting cooperation in co-facilitating resolution 76/250 with us. I thank the numerous sponsors for their support and all Member States for their constructive participation in the informals. With their help, we managed to agree on a text that is substantial, focused and balanced. I also thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting today, on the very day that marks the eightieth anniversary of the Wannsee Conference.

Germany joined this initiative immediately after the new Government took office in Berlin last month. It is Germany's historical responsibility to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive, and we are fully aware that we carry a special obligation in this regard.

Keeping the memory alive is a diverse task that comes in many forms. One important element, however, is to relentlessly oppose any attempt aimed at diminishing, distorting or denying the historical facts, because, as we put it in the resolution, ignoring historical facts increases the risk that they will be repeated.

It is disturbing that Holocaust denial and distortion have been on the rise again in recent years, especially online. Therefore, in the resolution we go beyond simply condemning the denial of the Holocaust. While acknowledging the efforts made so far, we call on Member States and United Nations specialized agencies, but also on social media companies, to take active measures against this disturbing trend.

In one week from today, we will commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day. I believe that the resolution we have just adopted is a significant contribution towards keeping the memory of the victims alive, and to making sure that the horrors of the past will never repeat themselves.

Never again.

The President: I would like to announce that the list of speakers for statements after adoption of the resolution has been closed.

I give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

Mr. Gonzato (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on resolution 76/250.

The candidate countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Liechtenstein align themselves with this statement.

As today marks 80 years since the Wannsee Conference, this resolution is timely, as it reminds us of the darkest chapter of Europe's history, but also of the importance of joint efforts to fight Holocaust denial or distortion today.

The European Union is a project rooted in the history of the European continent. The Holocaust took place on European soil and was the most abhorrent crime in history. Nearly 6 million Jews, 1.5 million of whom were children, as well as millions of members of other nationalities, minorities and vulnerable

groups, were killed in German Nazi concentration and extermination camps. The Holocaust was a turning point in our history, and its legacy is woven deeply into the DNA of the European Union. Remembering the Holocaust is a cornerstone of our values.

Our remembrance of Europe's tragic past should continue to drive us forward in facing the challenges of today, including creating open, inclusive and tolerant societies and communities, and promoting democracy and human rights.

We applaud Israel and Germany for their exemplary cooperation on this important resolution. We wish to thank the co-facilitators for the positive way in which the negotiations were conducted. We engaged constructively from the outset and the large majority of our proposals were taken on board.

The European Union's strong support is reflected in the early co-sponsorship of all of our Member States. We are very pleased that this resolution could be adopted by consensus today.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): The United States is proud to co-sponsor resolution 76/250 to combat the scourge of Holocaust denial. We appreciate the work our Israeli and German colleagues did to put forward this text, and we are pleased to see the overwhelming support of Member States, including those who added their names to co-sponsorship today. It has been 15 years since the United Nations adopted a resolution (resolution 60/7) on this crucial topic. Today's resolution could not have come at a more important moment. And I want to take this moment to welcome the presence of survivors in the Hall today to witness this historic day.

Last weekend, members of Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas, were held hostage by a gunman who reportedly used anti-Semitic language during the attack. As I was briefed on the attack and watched the news unfold, it was difficult not to recall the tragic loss of 11 lives in the attack on the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh just a few years ago.

And while we were relieved that in Colleyville the hostages escaped and survived, we know that a pernicious rising tide of anti-Semitism has led to deadly violence in the United States and elsewhere around the globe. We must root out anti-Semitic hatred and the false narratives that go hand in hand — in our communities, in our countries and in our institutions. This is why it is

so important that we consistently remember and speak out against the hatred that spurred the Holocaust. It is part of our sacred obligation to honour the memory of the millions of Jews and other victims who perished in it, by ensuring that we continue to say, again and again, "Never again. Never again".

This resolution affirms our commitment to educating the next generation as a means to prevent the repetition of the terrible atrocities of the past, and it reaffirms values and principles core to the founding of the United Nations, an institution built in the wake of the Holocaust and the Second World War. Adhering to the pledge of "never again" is our charge.

Today and every day, we must all keep up a vigorous guard against Holocaust denial, anti-Semitism and hate in all of its forms. We must learn from our history to move forward together in peace, and we must do everything in our power to push this institution to live up to its founding promise.

Mr. Klíma (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic aligns itself with the European Union (EU) statement and in its national capacity wishes to add the following.

The Czech Republic warmly welcomes the initiative of Israel to present resolution 76/250, on Holocaust denial, and congratulates Israel and Germany on its successful negotiation. The Czech Republic is proudly among the co-sponsors of this resolution, together with more than 100 Member States.

As we are marking today 80 years since the Wannsee Conference, this initiative is most timely. The Holocaust, as the biggest crime in our history, needs to be condemned in the strongest terms, but also never to be forgotten.

Only through education and a deep knowledge of history can we learn from the past. That will help us recognize new threats and stem hatred before it can overpower us again. We must seek the sources of and factors in Holocaust denial. Accountability must be a part of ensuring that such horrific crimes never happen again.

The Czech Republic remains committed to preventing and combating anti-Semitism. We support international platforms dedicated to developing specific proposals for legislative measures and educational programmes. We congratulate Sweden on having organized the International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance last year in Malmö. The Czech Republic

will host a follow-up International Terezin Declaration Conference, which has been endorsed by 47 countries. That ministerial event will be organized in the frame of the upcoming Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union this November. Its aim is to achieve progress in rectifying injustices from the time of the Holocaust, support educational programmes for young people and raise funds to combat anti-Semitism, xenophobia and hatred online and offline.

We welcome the recently published, first-ever EU Strategy on combating anti-Semitism and fostering Jewish life. At the national level, we are working on the Czech national strategy for combating anti-Semitism.

It is important to have legislative measures to ensure a safe and accountable online environment and to shorten the time between the appearance of anti-Semitic texts or hate speech on the Internet or social media and their removal. International cooperation and the sharing of good practices in those areas are essential.

Last but not least, the involvement of young people is crucial. Their new, fresh ideas can fill the Internet with positive content if they are motivated enough through education, grant projects and attractive competitions.

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): I wish to express my country's strong support for resolution 76/250, on Holocaust denial, and thank the delegations of Israel and Germany for this timely and very much needed initiative.

Poland subscribes to the statement delivered by the delegation of the European Union. In addition, I have the honour to offer the Assembly some general remarks in my national capacity.

Fighting and preventing Holocaust denial has special importance for Poland. Among the millions of Jewish victims who were exterminated as a result of the implementation of the murderous anti-Semitic ideology of German Nazism, 3 million were Polish citizens.

The interconnections between Holocaust denial, anti-Semitism and hate crimes motivated by anti-Semitism are obvious. In order to effectively fight them, we need to fight them all, including by creating tools that enable us to identify and fight the growing disinformation and distortion of the truth about the time of the Second World War. The resolution at hand, which for the first time defines Holocaust denial and distortion at the United Nations level, serves this important purpose.

Second only to the Jewish people, we, the Poles, took upon ourselves a special duty to help preserve the memory of the Holocaust. That is the case because a vast part of that tragedy took place on Polish territory occupied by Nazi Germany. That is the case because more than 80 years ago, we were the first victims of the attack by Nazi Germany and showed resilience in creating the largest resistance movement in the whole of war-torn Europe and in building a fully functioning underground State. That is the case because millions of Polish citizens lost their lives as a result of the implementation of Nazi ideology. That is the case because many of us risked our lives to help and rescue Jewish victims and to raise the alarm in the rest of the world about the truth of the Holocaust. That is the case because in an effort to pass on the truth to future generations, we continue to preserve the sites of former German Nazi concentration and extermination camps as museums and memorials.

It is therefore extremely important to us that the resolution honours those who fought the Nazis and who liberated German Nazi concentration and extermination camps, those who sought to rescue the victims of the Holocaust and those who are engaged in preserving places that memorialize the tragedy of the Holocaust. It is also of great significance to me personally, as I am privileged to have Righteous among the Nations among my family members.

We owe it to the victims to fulfil that obligation to remember, especially given the dwindling numbers of Holocaust survivors. But so long as survivors are still among us, it is to their voices that we should respectfully listen most of all. Our role is to preserve the truth, fight its denial and distortion, and educate future generations. The resolution on Holocaust denial provides us with ample tools to do just that.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): The Holocaust is a common tragedy and a source of guilt for humankind as a whole. More than one and a half million Ukrainian Jews were killed during the dark times of modern history. Millions of Ukrainians sacrificed themselves and made a tremendous contribution to the victory over Nazism by their exemplary heroism in the struggle for the liberation of their native soil and the countries of Europe.

In the Book of Isaiah, which is so important to both Jews and Christians, one can read:

“To all of them I erect a monument in my house and in my walls. I give them a name worth more than sons and daughters: I give them an eternal name that will never be erased”.

The monument and the name: Yad Vashem in Hebrew.

As a grandson of a survivor of the Buchenwald concentration camp, I had the privilege to visit the Monument to the Children in Yad Vashem in Israel last summer. The dark main room of the memorial is completely mirrored and reflects the light of only five candles. The reflection of those lights produces the illusion of space, which symbolizes the approximately 1.5 million children and youngsters who died during the Holocaust.

As one moves through the room in the sparse light of the candles, the names of the children killed and their age and place of death are recited on a looped tape recording. The recording takes about three months to list all those who perished. One hears Ukraine, Ukraine, Ukraine One also hears the names of other European countries and leaves the dark, candlelit room totally devastated but equally deeply determined to work hard to prevent such tragedies from ever happening again.

It is the duty, in my opinion, of every Ambassador to the United Nations and every official of the United Nations to visit Yad Vashem so as to reflect the experience in their daily work. I fully subscribe the words of Secretary-General António Guterres spoken during his visit to Yad Vashem in 2017:

“the Holocaust was not a crazy initiative of a group of paranoid Nazis, but it was the combination of millennia of persecution and discrimination of the Jewish people in what today we call anti-Semitism”.

I thank Secretary-General Guterres for those words. He is one of only three Secretaries-General to have visited Yad Vashem in what will soon be eight decades of the existence of the United Nations.

In October last year, around the world, the international community commemorated the eightieth anniversary of the massacre of Babyn Yar — one of the most heinous manifestations of the Holocaust perpetrated upon the territory of Ukraine. On 6 October 2021, the events dedicated to commemorating the eightieth anniversary were held at the Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Centre. At that time, the President

of Ukraine, together with the leaders of Israel and Germany, and hundreds of other guests from around the world, gathered together, as Babyn Yar remains symbolically one of the deepest unhealed wounds for Jews, Ukrainians, Roma and others. It is a sacred place that awakens and preserves historical memory.

Ukraine reaffirms its strongest condemnation of all forms of Nazism. Ukraine condemns Stalin’s cooperation with Nazism. Ukraine condemns neo-Nazism and other forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We are proud to co-sponsor the resolution 76/250, and we find it morally egregious to poison this historic moment with attacks that single out particular countries members of the General Assembly.

Mr. Stefanile (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

We welcome the adoption by consensus — on the day that marks 80 years since the infamous Wannsee Conference — of this important resolution (resolution 76/250), which we co-sponsored early. This initiative is timely and needed, as we witness worrying and growing examples of Holocaust denial and distortion through the use of information and communication technologies. Ignoring the historical facts of those terrible events increases the risk that they might be repeated. As the Italian writer and survivor of Auschwitz Primo Levi put it,

“It happened; therefore it can happen again...”.

This is why 27 January has been designated by the United Nations as the annual International Day of Commemoration, in memory of the Victims of the Holocaust.

Italy strongly rejects and firmly condemns any denial or distortion of the Holocaust as a historical event and commends the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance for its important contribution to the preservation of the memory of the Holocaust. By laying down, for the first time in the General Assembly, a definition of Holocaust denial, today’s resolution provides us with a fundamental tool to safeguard the truthful memory of the most appalling and tragic crime in history.

Mr. Hadjichrysanthou (Cyprus): Cyprus fully subscribes to the statement of the European Union. We strongly welcome the fact that the international

community has unanimously taken the step to condemn any denial of the Holocaust.

The resolution that has just been adopted by the General Assembly today (resolution 76/250) is important for the preservation of the integrity of historical truth, for combating attempts to sanitize history through revisionism, for ensuring accountability and for fighting impunity in respect of atrocities, and for the prevention of genocide. Above all, it fulfils a moral obligation towards the victims, for whom denial equals revictimization.

The message we give today is one that the distortion of historical facts will not be tolerated. We must honour this collective commitment in the face of such challenges as the passage of time and the demise of Holocaust survivors.

I shall conclude in this regard by underscoring that denial of the Holocaust, or any other genocide, is reprehensible and only condemns us to repeating history.

Mr. Lam Padilla (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala has the honour of co-sponsoring this important resolution (resolution 76/250), and I have the personal privilege of expressing our brotherhood with the Jewish people as a result of the catastrophe and terrible tragedy that was the Holocaust and genocide committed against them by the Nazi regime in the Second World War, taking into account the importance that my country attaches to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all international instruments that establish that every person has the right to enjoy his fundamental rights, and giving special attention and relevance in this regard to the human right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

In the same vein as resolution 76/250, Decree 12-2018 of the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala, dated 19 April 2018, declared 14 May as the Day of Friendship between the Republic of Guatemala and the State of Israel. Since that date the Guatemalan Ministry of Education carries out activities that commemorate the friendship, cooperation and help between peoples, based on mutual respect, tolerance and non-discrimination on the basis of ethnic, cultural or religious origin.

Resolution 76/250, which, again, we are honoured to co-sponsor, has a content of singular importance, especially in this General Assembly Hall, where, we,

the States Members of the United Nations, remind ourselves of the global commitment we have made to remembering the Holocaust, the worst crime in the human history and to fighting against Holocaust denial, recalling the unspeakable human suffering caused by intolerance, xenophobia, discrimination and anti-Semitism against the Jewish people, to whom we reiterate our solidarity.

We especially honour the memory of the victims. It is difficult for me to even imagine that this magnitude of evil could occur in the world. It is our responsibility to defend freedom of thought, conscience and religion so that an atrocity like the Holocaust will never be repeated — never again.

Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom): We would like to join others in thanking Israel and Germany for introducing this important resolution (resolution 76/250).

As others have said, collectively, we recall that 80 years ago today, the Wannsee Conference, in which the so-called final solution of the Jewish question was discussed and coordinated, resulted in the systematic establishment of the shameful Nazi death camps.

Today, across the globe, as the Israeli ambassador so accurately described earlier, there are malicious people who actively deny the historical reality of the Holocaust and seek to minimize the extent of the atrocities committed.

I accompanied Queen Elizabeth II to the site of the Bergen Belsen concentration camp during her State visit to Germany in 2015. There, we heard first-hand what the survivors of that camp had endured, and we heard from the liberators of Belsen what they had seen 70 years earlier.

These are the words of a British Broadcasting Corporation journalist accompanying those liberating troops:

“... Here over an acre of ground lay dead and dying people. You could not see which was which... The living lay with their heads against the corpses and around them moved the awful, ghostly procession of emaciated, aimless people and with no hope of life.”

Fifty thousand Jews were murdered in Bergen-Belsen, and that is just one part of the puzzle of the horror of the Holocaust. This is reality. Denying and distorting the Holocaust is a form of anti-Semitism.

We must not stand by when others revise history to erase the horror of the mass murder of the Jewish people. The United Kingdom looks forward to chairing the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in 2024, and we are proud to have been the first country to adopt the Alliance's working definition of anti-Semitism. We actively encourage other States to adopt it too. In 2025, the United Kingdom will open a new Holocaust memorial and learning centre to stand as a constant reminder of why we must be relentless in the fight against Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism.

We are proud to cosponsor this resolution today. We do so because we must remember, because we must stand firm with the truth and we must say clearly "never again".

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation makes this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States, as Egypt chairs the Group for January.

The Arab Group confirms that it aligns itself with the international consensus on resolution 76/250, entitled "Holocaust denial", given our proper human and ethical feeling as well as the gravity and danger of the horrific crime of the Holocaust. That crime is a black page in the history of humankind and should remain alive in the global conscience so that it is never repeated against any people, ethnicity or religion. We can only ensure that through sincere and intensive efforts by the international community to strengthen the culture of peace, tolerance, recognition of the suffering of others and return rights to their owners, including the right to self-determination and mutual, safe and peaceful coexistence.

As the Arab Group reiterates its condemnation of the Holocaust, it also reiterates its rejection of all other crimes of genocide and human tragedies. We underscore that crimes of the past should be a reason for further respect for international law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The Arab Group expresses the hope that the same spirit of consensus that we have seen today with regard to the adoption of this resolution will also be seen when we adopt other resolutions on discrimination against people on the basis of religion, ethnicity or any other consideration.

Serious action to combat intolerance, hate speech, extremism and terrorism is a duty and a necessity for

the international community in order to ensure a better future for humankind.

Mr. Pilipenko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The adoption of resolution 76/250, on Holocaust denial, on the eightieth anniversary of the Wannsee Conference and just in advance of International Holocaust Remembrance Day is an occasion for all of us to once again recall the tragic events of world history that remain an unhealed wound in the memory of our nation and the whole of the international community.

Belarus feels the pain of the Holocaust as its own. Our country went through all of the horrors of Hitler's genocide. Mass murders began virtually as soon as German troops arrived in Belarus and continued until the Republic was finally liberated. The Nazis organized 260 concentration camps and places of mass murder on the territory of Belarus, and more than 70 Jewish ghettos became the final resting place for more than 800,000 people. Among them were not only Jews from Belarus, but also citizens of many European countries. They arrived dying of hunger, brought by train from across Europe to Belarus for extermination. We still cherish the memory of the soldiers of the Red Army. They fought the brown plague and organized the evacuation of the Jewish population of Belarus.

We also remember the heroic acts of ordinary citizens of Belarus who helped Jews survive in very difficult conditions under Nazi occupation — saving them from certain death and, often, becoming victims of the Nazis themselves because of their actions. For the people of Belarus, the memory of the Holocaust tragedy is therefore holy, and maintaining that memory is an objective of national significance.

The first memorial to the victims of the Holocaust was built in Belarus as long ago as 1947, on the site of the inmates of the Minsk ghetto. Across Belarus, more than 500 memorials to the dead have already been built, and new ones are being built all the time, including with the participation of our foreign partners.

In recent years, Belarus has returned to a very underresearched subject, namely, the genocide of the Belarusian people, and a corresponding law was also adopted on the genocide of the Belarusian nation. New historical information is always being discovered, and previously unknown mass burial sites have also been found. Work is also ongoing to identify and rebury the victims.

In order for society to have an objective relationship to the historical past and to maintain and strengthen the unity of Belarusian people, 2022 was officially declared the Year of Historical Memory in Belarus. It is clear that protecting true historical memory is impossible without the involvement of all generations and the active involvement of young people. That is why 27 January, International Holocaust Memorial Day, was added to the calendar of important memorial dates adopted every year by the Ministry of Education. On that day, the victims of the many death camps and ghettos that were founded in occupied Belarus are remembered in our schools. New generations should remember the lessons of the past in order to not allow a similar tragedy to be repeated in the future and to value peace, stability and tranquillity.

Belarus is also making significant efforts in the international arena to promote initiatives to prevent a repeat of the tragic events and to maintain historical truth. Unfortunately, we must note that there are still attempts by some countries to falsify the history of the Second World War, to exonerate the crimes of the Third Reich and to glorify Nazi executioners and their allies.

Belarus thinks that is unacceptable. True to the memory of the victims of Nazism, we will continue to combat those efforts in an ongoing manner. That is one of our promises as candidate for a post as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2024 and 2025.

In conclusion, we would like to note that, in today's modern, unstable world, each of us should make every effort to combat neo-Nazism and the falsification of history in order to fight against intolerance and discrimination. That is the only way to maintain shared peace and security and to form a dignified community of truly united nations.

Mr. Mohd Nasir (Malaysia): My delegation joined the consensus on resolution 76/250, on Holocaust remembrance. We condemn the Holocaust. The Holocaust serves as a reminder of human tragedy and the heinous crime of genocide, which remains today a dark chapter in human history. The Holocaust reminds us of the dangers of racial discrimination, xenophobia and prejudice.

Historical books review that the roots of the Holocaust were planted much earlier than the infamous Wannsee Conference, which convened on 20 January 1942, 80 years ago. It began with subliminal messaging

through speech and the media, as well as the use of cartoons to disparage, alienate and target a group of people based on their race and faith. In the aftermath of the Second World War, we told ourselves that we would learn from history and ensure that tragedies like the Holocaust would never reoccur or be repeated. It is among the reasons why the United Nations was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

Sadly, the world today has yet to live up to the words and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, which we hold close and dear. The moral failures of the past remain. In some cases, those failures have allowed the United Nations to be sidestepped. We must learn from the Holocaust and subsequent human tragedies and ask: "Does the world need another Holocaust before the United Nations really lives up to its *raison d'être*?" I hope not.

The international community through the United Nations must intensify efforts to enhance and promote the culture of peace. The United Nations must push for greater efforts to combat racism, intolerance and xenophobia in all their forms. Malaysia hopes that the United Nations and the international community will also support other important resolutions, conferences and activities that are similar to the spirit of resolution 76/250, in calling for the elimination of racism, intolerance, hate speech and other prejudices that warrant international attention and action.

The President: We have heard the last speaker for this item.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 16.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

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

The President: Members will recall that, at its second plenary meeting on 17 September 2021, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (a) of agenda item 23 to the Second Committee. To enable the Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 23 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided (decision 76/506 B).

Agenda item 23 (continued)**Groups of countries in special situations****(a) Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries****Draft decision (A/76/L.32)**

The President: The General Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/76/L.32. In this connection, I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): This oral statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of draft decision A/76/L.32, the General Assembly would decide to further postpone the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to a date to be decided at the earliest possible time. The adoption of the draft decision would not entail any budgetary implications with regard to the programme budget. Upon a further decision by the General Assembly on the date of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Secretary-General would reassess the budgetary implications and advise the General Assembly in accordance with rule 153 of its rules of procedures. Furthermore, in accordance with established practice, the date of the Fifth United Nations Conference would be determined in consultation with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/76/L.32, entitled "Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision A/76/L.32?

Draft decision A/76/L.32 was adopted (decision 76/551).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 23

Mr. Salovaara (Finland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Agenda Item 116 (continued)**Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections****(b) Election of the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme****Note by the Secretary-General (A/76/638)**

The Acting President: As stated in the Secretary-General's note (A/76/638), the General Assembly, in its resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001, decided to transform the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements into the secretariat of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). In the same resolution, the Assembly also decided that the UN-Habitat secretariat should be headed by an Executive Director at the level of Under-Secretary-General, to be elected by the Assembly for a term of four years upon nomination by the Secretary-General after consultation with Member States.

On 22 December 2017, the General Assembly, in its decision 72/413, on the nomination of the Secretary-General, elected Maimunah Mohd Sharif of Malaysia as Executive Director of UN-Habitat, at the Under-Secretary-General level, for a term of office of four years. Ms. Sharif took up her duties on 20 January 2018 and, accordingly, her term of office ended on 19 January 2022.

In the light of the provisions of resolution 56/206, the Secretary-General proposes to the General Assembly that the term of office of Ms. Sharif as Executive Director of UN-Habitat be extended for two years, beginning on 20 January 2022 and ending on 19 January 2024.

Accordingly, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to re-elect Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif as Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for a term of office of two years, beginning on 20 January 2022 and ending on 19 January 2024?

It was so decided (decision 76/415).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 116?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (continued)**Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items**

The Acting President: I invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft decision A/76/L.31 and draft amendments A/76/L.33/Rev.1 and A/76/L.34/Rev.1, circulated under agenda item 109, entitled “Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes”.

Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2021, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 109 to the Third Committee to enable the Assembly to take action expeditiously on the documents.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 109 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided. (decision 76/506 B).

The Acting President: In that connection, since the draft amendment was circulated only this morning, it would be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

“As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting.”

Unless I hear any objections, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees with my proposal to waive rule 78 of the rules of procedure.

It was so decided.

Agenda item 109 (continued)**Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes****Draft decision A/76/L.31****Draft amendments (A/76/L.33/Rev.1 and A/76/L.34/Rev.1)**

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft decision A/76/L.31.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia submitted draft decision A/76/L.31, entitled

“Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes”.

Our document aims to maintain the modalities approved by resolution 75/282 to convene sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee. The order of meetings, in both New York and Vienna, was the result of a long negotiation process. We cannot allow the time and effort it took for the General Assembly to reach joint compromise solutions to be in vain.

The Secretariat has not clearly determined whether it is possible to hold a meeting at Headquarters in New York, given the current circumstances. As a result, the Ad Hoc Committee could not commence its work within the agreed deadline.

However, as we can see, other in-person meetings are being held in the normal way. Today’s meeting here and a number of other meetings planned for January confirm that fact. We are convinced that the coronavirus disease situation should not mean that processes have to stagnate or that we cannot take action on what has already been agreed upon. We are interested in convening the first substantive meeting in New York as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, the amended version submitted by the Dominican Republic (A/76/L.33/Rev.1) includes more questionable elements. Now it mentions not only reviewing agreements that have already been reached, but also changing the general approach to organizing and holding meetings at Headquarters. Moreover, priority is given to such criteria as “space and conditions” and “health conditions”. We cannot not begin to understand what those would mean.

However, we are convinced that this is a very negative precedent, not only for the Ad Hoc Committee but also for other subsequent meetings. Member States risk losing any control over the proceedings. The Secretariat would be able to decide unilaterally whether a specific meeting should be held or not. Thus, such selective approaches to the convening of meetings, whereby some would be considered more important than others, will be reaffirmed and further developed. Unlike the Dominican Republic’s proposal, the Belarusian proposal (A/76/L.34/Rev.1), like the Russian one from the very beginning, does not go beyond a technical solution and does not change any

modalities for the Committee that have already been agreed upon.

We encourage all States that are interested in the successful and smooth functioning of the Committee in line with resolution 75/282, adopted by consensus, I repeat — by consensus — to support the Russian proposal contained in draft decision A/76/L.31 and the Belarusian proposal contained in draft amendment A/76/L.34/Rev.1.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Dominican Republic to introduce draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1.

Mrs. Cedano (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Dominican Republic has participated enthusiastically in the efforts of the international community at the United Nations to draft a new international instrument on cybercrime. We have consistently expressed our determination to work with all Member States to draft an international treaty that will represent each and every one of us, guided by the principles of transparency, impartiality and inclusion.

For our country, compliance with the mandate given by the General Assembly to the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes is an extremely high priority.

Given the current situation, which has compelled us to postpone the first substantive session of the Ad Hoc Committee as a result of the severe impact of the pandemic in New York and elsewhere in the world, the decision we take today must be one that provides us with the utmost certainty.

That certainty must be based on the information available as to when that first substantive session can be held in person with the least possible risk to the health of participants. That is why we must adopt the most realistic proposal in order to ensure that, in a few weeks' time, we will not find ourselves in the same situation we are in today and compelled to postpone the session once again.

Overnight, the pandemic has replaced what is desirable with what is possible. Whether we like it or not, that is our new reality. Despite those constraints and in the spirit of consensus that must guide our work, as soon as we learned of draft amendment A/76/L.34/Rev.1, submitted by Belarus, we decided to incorporate

its main elements in draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1, submitted by our delegation. However, we also take into account the possibility that, prior to 18 April, there may not be rooms available in New York for the Committee's first substantive session.

Therefore, draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1, which I have the honour to introduce on behalf of the Dominican Republic and its co-sponsors, focuses on four main aspects.

First, it proposes the postponement of the first substantive session of the Ad Hoc Committee, scheduled to be held from 17 to 28 January 2022, as a result of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

Secondly, it addresses the concern of delegations represented only in New York to participate in the voting on organizational matters that will be conducted during the first substantive session of the Ad Hoc Committee by proposing to hold a one-day meeting in New York, preferably before 28 February.

Thirdly, it proposes that the first substantive session of the Ad Hoc Committee be held in New York no later than 18 April, health and physical distancing permitting, and, if that is not possible, that it be held on the date and at the venue already reserved for the second substantive session of the Ad Hoc Committee, that is, from 30 May to 10 June in Vienna, retaining the rest of the schedule as agreed, with the addition of only one final substantive session to be held in New York, in addition to the concluding session scheduled to be held in New York to adopt the draft convention in the months available before the convening of the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly in 2024.

Fourthly, and of equal importance, it explicitly includes the point that a minimum of 11 weeks should be left between the substantive sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee with a view to protecting the right of smaller delegations to contribute on an equal footing to the drafting process for the new convention.

The draft amendment addresses practical considerations, ensures respect for the principles of inclusiveness and transparency during the negotiation process and preserves the agreements reached in the course of the many informal consultations held in Vienna. We therefore ask that Member States vote in favour of draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1.

Finally, we wish to assure all delegations that the draft amendment is submitted in a constructive spirit

and with the aim of addressing essential long-term issues so that the Ad Hoc Committee can formally begin its work as soon as possible, in accordance with resolutions 74/247 and 75/282.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus to introduce draft amendment A/76/L.34/Rev.1.

Mr. Evseenko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The proposal of Belarus submitted in draft amendment A/76/L.34/Rev.1 is to find a compromise, and we propose that the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee be held no later than 18 April. In that way, we will not review the agreements reached earlier but retain the possibility of being flexible in outlining the new dates for the first session of the Committee, to be held in New York, given the coronavirus disease situation.

The proposal by the Dominican Republic submitted in draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1 was reviewed, but we think that our proposal is still relevant, and we think that the Dominican Republic proposal includes some internal contradictions. For example, it is not clear whether the proposal to hold a meeting on 28 February complies with resolution 75/282. The criteria for holding the meeting — namely, provided that the health conditions and space permit it to be held — do not make it clear how we would work in the future and for all future activities of the General Assembly.

It seems to us that the proposal of the Dominican Republic would lead to an unclear precedent for everyone, not only for the Ad Hoc Committee but also for other bodies within the United Nations.

The Acting President: Before we take action on draft decision A/76/L.31 and draft amendments A/76/L.33/Rev.1 and A/76/L.34/Rev.1, I wish to outline how we will proceed.

Delegations wishing to make a statement in explanation of vote before the voting on the draft decision and/or the draft amendments will be invited to do so shortly in one intervention.

Thereafter, the Assembly will proceed to consider draft amendment A/76/L.34/Rev.1, submitted by Belarus, which proposes an amendment to draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1 submitted by the Dominican Republic. The Assembly will then consider draft decision A/76/L.33/Rev.1 submitted by the Dominican Republic, which proposes an amendment to draft decision A/76/L.31, submitted by the Russian

Federation. Finally, the Assembly will consider draft decision A/76/L.31, submitted by the Russian Federation.

Are there any comments?

I hear no objections; we shall proceed accordingly.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I have two oral statements to make under rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The first oral statement is as follows.

Under the terms of draft decision A/76/L.31 as amended by draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1 as amended by draft amendment A/76/L.34/Rev.1, the General Assembly would decide that the Ad Hoc Committee shall hold its first negotiation session in New York no later than 18 April 2022.

In relation to the requirements for the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee referred to in resolution 75/282, which were included in the report on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session (A/76/372), the adoption of the draft decision as amended and further amended would not entail any budgetary implications with regard to the programme budget in 2022.

The Secretary-General indicated that the resource requirements for 2023 and 2024, as presented in the report on revised estimates, would be included in the proposed programme budget for 2023 and 2024. The impact on the schedule of the sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee to be held in 2023 and 2024 resulting from the adoption of draft decision A/76/L.31, as amended by draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1 as amended by draft amendment A/76/L.34/Rev.1, remains unknown at this stage.

The decision relating to the schedule of all sessions remains the prerogative of the Ad Hoc Committee. Any change in resource requirements for 2023 and 2024 emanating from changes in the schedule for the sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee in 2023 and 2024 as compared to the assumptions made in the report on revised estimates would be communicated if and as applicable to the respective intergovernmental body deciding on such changes, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The

budget proposal to the General Assembly for 2023 and 2024 would reflect any such changes.

Furthermore, in accordance with the established practice, the dates of the sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee would be determined by the Ad Hoc Committee, in consultation with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management in New York and the Conference Management Service of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

This concludes the first oral statement.

The second oral statement, also made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, is as follows.

Under the terms of draft decision A/76/L.31 as amended by draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1, the General Assembly would decide to postpone the first session of the Ad Hoc Committee scheduled to be held in New York from 17 to 28 January 2022; that the Ad Hoc Committee shall convene at least six sessions of 10 days each, to be held no less than 11 weeks apart; that the Ad Hoc Committee shall hold a one-day meeting in New York as soon as possible, preferably before 28 February 2022, for the purpose of addressing organizational matters; that the Ad Hoc Committee shall hold its first negotiation session in New York no later than 18 April 2022, health conditions and space permitting; and that, if health conditions and space do not permit the holding of a meeting in New York by April 2022, the Ad Hoc Committee shall hold its first negotiation session in May 2022, and the sequencing of the meetings shall then be as follows: the first, third and fourth sessions shall be held in Vienna and the second, fifth and sixth sessions in New York, with a concluding session to be held in New York.

In relation to the requirements of the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee referred to in resolution 75/282, which were included in the report on the revised estimates resulting from the resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, the adoption of the draft decision as amended would not entail any budgetary implications with regard to the programme budget in 2022.

The Secretary-General indicated that the resource requirements for 2023 and 2024, as presented in the report on revised estimates, would be included in the proposed programme budgets for 2023 and 2024. The impact on the schedule of the sessions of the Ad

Hoc Committee in 2023 and 2024 resulting from the adoption of draft decision A/76/L.31, as amended by A/76/L.33/Rev.1, remains unknown at this stage.

The decision relating to the schedule of all sessions remains the prerogative of the Ad Hoc Committee. Any change in the resource requirements for 2023 and 2024 emanating from changes in the schedule of the sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee in 2023 and 2024 as compared to the assumptions made in the report on the revised estimates would be communicated, if and as applicable, to the respective intergovernmental body deciding on such changes, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The budget proposals to the General Assembly for 2023 and 2024 would reflect any such changes.

Furthermore, in accordance with the established practice, the dates of the sessions of the Ad Hoc Committee would be determined by the Ad Hoc Committee in consultation with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management in New York and the Conference Management Service of the United Nations Office in Vienna.

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

Mrs. Gasri (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

The European Union and its member States reiterate their support for the efforts of the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes and of the Secretariat in the current context, particularly in view of the difficulties and uncertainties in the context of a global pandemic. Unfortunately, we are facing a situation of force majeure.

The European Union and its member States share the flexibility, the constructive spirit and the will of all delegations to look at all the possible options in order to permit the first formal session of the Ad Hoc Committee to be held as soon as possible, despite the current health situation.

As we have said many times throughout this process, the European Union and its member States

would like to recall once again that our main objective is to ensure that the negotiation process is open, inclusive and transparent — and therefore legitimate and also predictable. That involves doing everything possible to ensure that as many countries and stakeholders as possible can attend the formal negotiation session, which should start as soon as possible, without jeopardizing the health of the participants. That also involves allowing sufficient time between formal sessions so that all delegations, including the smallest ones, can prepare and submit their contributions and participate effectively in the negotiations. Therefore, we do not see any viable option other than the one proposed by the Dominican Republic in draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1.

In its letter of 19 January, the Secretariat confirmed that there were no meeting rooms available in New York for a two-week session until April and that it was not yet in a position to provide a clear indication of how the situation would evolve in the coming months until August.

We recognize that holding an entirely virtual meeting, even following a first day of in-person meetings in New York, is not an acceptable alternative for many delegations. Given the current constraints and objective modalities available to us and given the various proposals on the table, the European Union and its member States can fully support only the proposal of the Dominican Republic, that is, that we address the organizational issues during a one-day “zero session” in New York and then, if health conditions and the availability of meeting rooms allow, hold the first formal session no later than 18 April.

More important, the proposal of the Dominican Republic includes a scenario in the event that the global pandemic situation does not permit that session to be held on that date, which would mean beginning the discussions in May in Vienna in order to allow sufficient time for translation and to respect the time frame foreseen in resolution 75/282.

Finally, the proposal also ensures that there is an adequate period of at least 11 weeks between formal sessions to ensure the inclusiveness of the whole process and to give delegations time to prepare and organize for each session.

We would also like to stress once again the importance of a predictable process and ensuring that the first substantive session can be held as soon

as possible under good conditions. That is why we call on all Member States to support draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1, submitted by the Dominican Republic, and to vote against draft amendment A/76/34/Rev.1, submitted by Belarus.

Mr. Ghadirkhomi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The use of information and telecommunications for criminal purposes often transcends geographical boundaries, which, as a global problem, affects us all, requiring an urgent, effective and united response. Any delay to act accordingly will provide criminals more opportunities for expanding their pernicious activities and will only create loopholes for criminals to enjoy impunity and evade the administration of justice, in particular by exploiting the ambiguities and existing challenges in international judicial cooperation among States.

Given the vital importance of an expedited and collective response to such crimes, my delegation welcomes any initiative that can lead to the immediate implementation of resolution 74/247 and the operationalization of the arrangements and the very purposes envisaged in resolution 75/282 concerning the convening of the first session of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes.

We understand the concerns emanating from the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), but the pandemic has also created conditions that have led to the development of, and rise in, crimes, especially new forms of crimes in cyberspace, COVID-19 should therefore not be assumed as an obstacle that prevents us from tackling those crimes; rather, it should be among the very reasons for taking action against such crimes right away.

That is why we believe in the continuity of proper business within the United Nations system, in particular the Ad Hoc Committee. My delegation strongly supports the holding of inclusive and meaningful negotiations within the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes as soon as possible. As we are now present in this Hall, we can also participate in the Ad Hoc Committee, while meeting relevant health protocols, as we have done since the outbreak of the pandemic.

My delegation commends the constructive proposal made by the Russian Federation in draft decision A/76/L.31 and the draft amendments (A/76/L.34/Rev.1) put forward by Belarus, which are consistent with resolution 75/282. We, as sovereign States, should decide how to proceed, and the Secretariat should provide suitable facilities for holding the meeting, as it has always done so attentively.

In the light of that and given the urgent need to immediately commence the first session of the Ad Hoc Committee for an effective response to the pressing challenges of crimes committed through the use of information and communications technology, we underline that any further delay in the convening of the first meeting not only is of no benefit to the international community but also would lead criminals to jeopardize the rule of law, to the detriment of all. We therefore invite all Member States to decide with a view to facilitating and expediting the convening of the first session as promptly as possible. It would be regrettable if the politicized views of a few were to affect judgments on the vital significance and very essentiality of the commencement of that process.

Mr. Poveda Brito (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela takes the floor to explain its position on draft decision A/76/L.31 and draft amendments A/76/L.33/Rev.1 and A/76/L.34/Rev.1, which are before the General Assembly, aware of the importance of moving forward without delay in the negotiations on a United Nations comprehensive international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes.

The inclusiveness and transparency of the Organization are a guarantee for all States to participate in an open and robust process that takes into account the various regional, national, cultural, economic and political realities and rapidly unites a comprehensive and legally binding commitment among all Member States regarding this crucial issue, whose implications and scope know no borders.

In that regard, Venezuela has actively, decisively and constructively supported all initiatives taken within the United Nations to move that process forward. We reaffirm our commitment to continuing to contribute to a future convention through this space and our national experience.

While we are aware of the impact that the coronavirus disease pandemic has had on the opportunity to start the process, Venezuela also believes that the global situation heightens the need to combat cybercrime, which has increased over the past two years, while deeming it necessary to maximize the Organization's efforts to move forward as soon as possible in establishing a schedule for the process.

In that regard, Venezuela wishes to express its support for the proposals put forward by the Russian Federation and Belarus to start the work of the Ad Hoc Committee as soon as possible, which preserve the spirit of resolution 75/282, giving the highest priority to the process, even in the complex context of the current situation.

Finally, Venezuela expresses its gratitude for the international efforts under way to strengthen cooperation in countering cybercrime. We reaffirm our willingness to continue to contribute in a constructive, solid and decisive manner to combating that scourge and to the process towards the future adoption of a convention on an issue of great importance to the entire international community.

Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom): We, like others, are absolutely committed to the process of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes, and we are fully supportive of the Chair and, in particular, the Secretariat as we try to work through what are clearly difficult circumstances to critically find a solution that meets the condition, set in our previous resolution 75/282, of balance between New York and Vienna.

However, it is important to remember that we have been in such a situation before. We have sat in this Hall and demanded that meetings on cybercrime take place on certain dates, and those dates have not been logistically possible. We had to come back to the Hall and set new dates. That is what we should now try to avoid as far as we can. I think that it is really important that when we take this decision today, we take it on the basis of sound common sense and good logistical thinking vis-à-vis what is actually possible.

The Secretariat works for us. It knows what we are trying to achieve, and it is clearly working incredibly hard to deliver that in line with the original resolution. But it is currently saying that it cannot facilitate that

on the timeline that we requested. It is right that we come back and reconsider that, but what should we do? Essentially, we have two choices today. We have a choice between the Belarusian draft amendment A/76/L.34/Rev.1 and the Dominican Republic draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1. They are two very different options. One is an absolute demand from Belarus that the negotiating session take place on a particular date. The other, put forward by the Dominican Republic, is a much more sensible request that the session take place on that date if it can, but that we have an insurance policy, or a fallback option, if that cannot be delivered.

Because the United Kingdom believes in common sense, we will support the Dominican Republic's solution, and we will vote today for the Ad Hoc Committee to convene as expeditiously as the Secretariat can make that happen — ideally on the first date offered. But, if that is not possible, we recognize that that cannot be done, and we will vote for the option that gives us the fallback of beginning the process in Vienna. That is not ideal. We would have the zero day here to work through the organizational issues, but the first substantive session would take place in Vienna, and we would support that.

The United Kingdom will vote against the Belarusian draft amendment. We will vote in favour of the Dominican Republic draft amendment, and, if it is adopted, we will vote in favour of draft decision A/76/L.31.

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We have a number of proposals before us for the organization at the first session of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes. Switzerland thanks the Dominican Republic for draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1 and its co-sponsors for the following four reasons: the realities of the pandemic, flexibility, predictability and the importance of proper preparation.

On the realities of the pandemic, the Omicron variant has led to a sharp increase in the number of cases around the world since December. New York has not been spared by the new variant. In the month of December, the city saw a 30 per cent increase in daily cases. On that basis, various communications from the Secretariat state that it is not able to guarantee sufficient staff to service additional meetings in New

York in January, February or March. We take note of that information and, given the context of the pandemic, fully support the Chair's decision to postpone the first formal session of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Regarding flexibility, draft amendment A.76/L.33/Rev.1, put forward by the Dominican Republic, proposes that if the health situation and the availability of conference services allow, the first session will be held no later than 18 April. The draft amendment therefore enables us to take any possible opportunity, should it arise, if health conditions and logistics allow.

On predictability, if it is not possible to hold the first session in New York between now and 18 April, the proposal to consider holding the first session in Vienna between the end of May and the beginning of June also offers a certain predictability, which is important for Switzerland. That proposal answers a number of concerns. We have a fixed date for the first session, with rooms already reserved. We will be honouring the timeline that we agreed, and we will be respecting the health of delegates and United Nations staff.

In conclusion, my delegation highlights the importance of having time to prepare. With sufficient time between sessions, allowing for proper preparation, it will be an inclusive process that gives all delegations the opportunity to take part in the process.

According to the information we have, 10 weeks are necessary for the translation of documents into the United Nations official languages. We therefore welcome the proposal put forward by the Dominican Republic, which allows for enough time between sessions.

For all those reasons, Switzerland co-sponsored the draft amendment proposed by the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Mack (United States of America): First and foremost, we would like to express our appreciation to the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes and the Secretariat for their efforts to find safe and inclusive methods for us to continue to undertake our important work.

The United States shares the frustration and disappointment expressed by many delegations today that the pandemic has yet again stymied our efforts to move forward in this process. We were prepared for the meeting this week, as scheduled, and would have

considered a variety of formats acceptable to hold it on time. We did not want to postpone it.

We must also recognize the unique circumstances that we are all currently facing, with many United Nations staff and fellow diplomats taken ill by the coronavirus disease or isolating due to close exposure. Some of our friends and colleagues have become gravely sick. We cannot ignore that fact.

The General Assembly just took the difficult decision to postpone the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, a very important conference that helps to guide United Nations work in support of the economic development of least developed countries and occurs only once a decade, by consensus. Other important meetings, such as the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the meeting of the Committee on Non-Governmental Partners, were also postponed. We took those hard decisions in recognition of the current pandemic-related health and safety precautions. It is unfortunate that some delegations seem to believe that such precautions pertain to delaying the priorities of only some, and not all.

As we consider our next steps, we must not allow this setback to undermine the core values that we hope all Member States share. We should set dates that ensure an inclusive schedule so that all Member States can contribute equally to this important work.

We trust the Chair and the secretariat of the Ad Hoc Committee and the Secretariat at Headquarters when they tell us that there is not a block of physical meeting space available for a two-week period, with sufficient staffing, for a New York-based meeting to be held before our scheduled session in August. We also take them at their word that the United Nations is facing staffing challenges, given the pandemic conditions impacting all of us globally. For that reason, we support the Dominican Republic's draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1, which is a technical proposal to begin substantive negotiations during our planned meeting in Vienna at the end of May. Given the current limitations, that is the earliest possible time we can get started.

However, we recognize the strong interest in beginning this process in New York and respect the delicate balance that we struck in May on the location of each session. We also appreciate the Dominican Republic's efforts to take on board the concerns expressed by Belarus in putting forward its draft

amendment, contained in document A/76/L.34/Rev.1, by orally revising the Dominican Republic's proposal. We therefore welcome the Dominican Republic's revision to allow for us to hold our first session earlier in New York should health conditions and schedules allow.

We appreciate that the Dominican Republic has also specified a minimum length of time between sessions to guarantee that Member States have adequate time to contribute and prepare for each negotiation. That ensures an inclusive structure for our process, while still allowing us to begin earlier than May if conditions in New York allow.

We, like everyone, would like to start negotiations earlier, as envisioned by the Belarusian draft amendment. However, realistically, we know that that is not possible given the limitations presented by the pandemic and the United Nations schedule. When asked about the potential to hold an initial negotiation in New York in February or March, the Secretariat made clear that, after a careful review of the calendar of conferences, it could not identify a two-week meeting slot. The Secretariat had not been asked about the possibility for such a meeting in April, but the answer is likely the same — hence the importance of including flexibility in today's decision.

We cannot vote in favour of an unrealistic proposal that will only have us back in this Hall in a few months to again debate this process. We need to start thinking about building the substance of our treaty, as opposed to our meeting schedule and other logistical details. Only the Dominican Republic's proposal, as orally revised, will allow us to do that.

The United States will vote against the Belarusian draft amendment and urges all delegations to do the same. We will vote in favour of the Dominican Republic's proposed amendment as the only feasible way forward. We call upon all delegations to join us in doing so.

We hope that, after a path forward is established today, we can focus on an inclusive process where the voices of many will be listened to and heard. Only through such inclusivity can our future negotiations result in a treaty that we can all support.

Mr. Falzeta Zanini (Brazil): Brazil's long-standing position on cybercrime is one that emphasizes the need for a convention to counter the use of information and telecommunications for criminal purposes — an

instrument that should be negotiated with transparency and inclusivity and gathers the whole membership under the same endeavour.

I believe it is true to say that not only Brazil but also the vast majority of the membership was ready to start the negotiations this week. Aeroplane tickets had been issued and rooms had been booked. But to hold a two-week in-person meeting when coronavirus disease cases are at an all-time high in New York would be imprudent. Moreover, we are hopeful that the postponement will be short and will not change the essence of the negotiation process.

Turning to the action before us today, draft amendments A/76/L.33/Rev.1 and A/76/L.34/Rev.1 both mention that the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes shall hold its first session in New York no later than 18 April. However, in yesterday's letter, the Secretariat ruled out the possibility of holding the first negotiating session in New York during the months of February or March. That provision leaves few dates to hold the session at the beginning of April. In line with that, Brazil decided to co-sponsor the Dominican Republic's draft amendment, contained in document A/76/L.33/Rev.1, due to its greater flexibility if the 18 April deadline proves impossible to meet. In that case, the first session will take place in Vienna by the end of May, thereby making the adoption of a new draft resolution unnecessary.

Ms. McIntyre (Australia): I take the floor to explain Australia's position on the three draft proposals before us relating to agenda item 7 on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes.

Like others, Australia is committed to a transparent, inclusive and productive negotiation process of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes to elaborate a cybercrime convention, and we strongly support the Chair's leadership of this process. We are also committed to ensuring that all countries can equitably and constructively engage in a process that is so important to us all. In doing so, we have to remain pragmatic when faced with the realities associated with progressing that work during a global pandemic and make decisions that are grounded in fact.

As others have said, the modalities agreed by consensus in resolution 75/282 strike a carefully negotiated balance on the location, sequencing and spacing of negotiating sessions. Australia considers that that balance should be upheld and protected.

The technical amendment to draft decision A/76/L.31, proposed by the Dominican Republic in document A/76/L.33/Rev.1 and co-sponsored by Australia and approximately 40 other States, upholds that careful balance. It does so while also ensuring that we do not further compromise the health and safety of our delegations and United Nations staff, noting the already grave impact of the pandemic on many.

The Dominican Republic's draft amendment balances speed, safety and certainty. It would ensure that we start the substantive work of the Ad Hoc Committee the moment it is practicably possible to do so, allowing us to continue exploring options to hold the first session in New York during the next few months, subject to the practical realities of prevailing conditions at United Nations Headquarters and with due regard for the Secretariat's advice on health and safety.

Should, however, conditions in New York not allow a meeting by 18 April, the draft amendment provides a fallback option of holding a one-day organizational meeting in New York and holding the first negotiating session in Vienna. That ensures certainty; it relies upon rooms already booked and meeting dates already scheduled. Belarus's proposal (A/76/L.34/Rev.1) provides no such fallback option or certainty. That is why we cannot support it. We do not want to find ourselves back here in the General Assembly renegotiating this in a few weeks' time if the pandemic causes further disruptions to scheduling proposals.

The Dominican Republic's proposal would also preserve the pace of negotiations envisaged in resolution 75/282 and elaborated in the Ad Hoc Committee's proposed meeting schedule and road map. Most importantly, it would protect against any erosion of the gaps between the formal negotiating sessions. Australia considers that those gaps will be just as important as the sessions themselves. They are necessary to give all States time to consult, to meet informally with stakeholders, to prepare draft convention texts, to develop proposals and to consider the proposals of others. Shorter gaps will particularly disadvantage smaller or less well-resourced delegations and have to be avoided.

An appropriate period of time between formal sessions is crucial to give the Secretariat time to consolidate and translate the submissions made by States. Again, that is an important element of inclusivity and promotes the ability of all States to remain engaged in negotiations. We therefore cannot support Belarus's draft amendments with the proposal for a condensed time frame between the Ad Hoc Committee's first and second negotiating sessions.

Australia has co-sponsored the Dominican Republic's proposal as it is a sensible, balanced and inclusive way forward, and we consider that it appropriately reflects the common interests and objectives of all Member States. To recap, it allows the Committee to start its work as soon as possible while also providing contingencies so that we do not have to come back here to the General Assembly if the pandemic causes further disruptions. We call on all other States to support the Dominican Republic's proposal.

Moreover, going forward in the substantive discussions, Australia urges all countries to focus on what we can all do to bring us back together. It is our view that what ultimately unites us — that is, our commitment and efforts to prevent, address and counter cybercrime — will vastly outweigh the few issues that divide us.

Mr. Ríos Sánchez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation will vote in favour of the draft amendment put forward by the Dominican Republic, contained in document A/76/L.33/Rev.1. We believe that that text provides Member States and the Secretariat with the flexibility necessary to meet the pandemic-related challenges we are facing.

We see the draft amendment as a way of appropriately following up on resolution 75/282, bearing in mind the force majeure reasons that led us to postpone the first session of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes, which should, according to the resolution, have taken place in January.

We also recognize that in the revised version, the draft amendment proposed by the Dominican Republic welcomes the timeline proposed in the Belarusian text (A/76/L.34/Rev.1). We deplore the fact that in this process we have set aside deliberations within the Ad Hoc Committee. Similarly, having had specific

information from the New York and Vienna secretariats with regard to the availability of conference rooms to hold the sessions would have been extremely useful for our discussions. The response from the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to the Chair of the Committee sent yesterday was a step in the right direction. We hope that that clarity and certainty can be reflected in decisions on holding other in-person meetings in United Nations forums.

Mr. Al Khalil (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Syrian Arab Republic would underscore that the danger posed by cybercrime is increasing day by day because of the growing use of information and communications technologies by criminal networks and terrorist groups for criminal and terrorist purposes. That undermines the stability of States and their infrastructure as well as their institutions, especially their social and cultural fabric along with their economic and social development.

The widening of the digital divide among States definitely undermines the capabilities of many States to prevent and fight those crimes and bring the perpetrators to justice. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the instruments of criminal law currently applicable at the regional and international levels are insufficient to address the illegitimate use of information and communications technologies in criminal and terrorist acts. Currently, there is no international convention in that context, except for the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, which does not include the use of information and communications technologies in terrorist acts. My country's delegation therefore welcomes the holding of meetings by the Ad Hoc Committee as soon as possible in order to establish a comprehensive international convention on addressing the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes. Accordingly, we support the draft decision put forward by the Russian delegation (A/76/L.31). We also support any initiative to hold meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee as soon as possible.

(*spoke in English*)

We call on all Member States to defend the validity of the governmental decision-making process at the United Nations and to support the convening of the Committee as soon as possible.

Ms. Minale (Ethiopia): I take the floor to express Ethiopia's view and to convey our concern in regard to

the organization of the meeting of the first substantive session of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes. I should like primarily to thank the Chair of the Committee for her tireless efforts to bridge the differences on the modalities of the meeting generated by the global pandemic.

We attach great importance to having a global instrument on the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes. It is also our hope that the process of the Ad Hoc Committee will come up with a convention that applies and remains relevant throughout time and in various contexts. That very purpose requires inclusivity in the Ad Hoc Committee process.

As one of the more than 40 countries that do not have a representation in Vienna, it is critical for my delegation that all meetings allotted to New York happen in New York. The first substantive session is critical in setting the tone for the entire process, and we are not prepared to have it somewhere else.

Our full participation therein and preparations therefor depend on the assumption we had based on resolution 75/282. On that basis, we cannot support a proposal that could possibly change the venue of the first substantive session, which, in our view, is critical, as it sets the tone for subsequent engagements.

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

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): At this stage, before the General Assembly proceeds to take action on documents A/76/L.31, A/76/L.33/Rev.1 and A/76/L.34/Rev.1, I would like to address the co-sponsorship of those three documents, one by one.

First, on draft decision A/76/L.31, I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft decision and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, Nicaragua has also become a co-sponsor.

Let me then proceed to A/76/L.33/Rev.1. I should like to announce that since the submission of that draft amendment, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become

co-sponsors of the draft amendment: Albania, Brazil, Chile, Cyprus, Fiji, Israel, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Korea, Romania and the United Kingdom.

Finally, let me turn to the co-sponsors of A/76/L.34/Rev.1. The co-sponsors are listed in the document.

The Acting President: As I mentioned earlier, we will first take action on draft amendment A/76/L.34/Rev.1, submitted by Belarus.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Grenada, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Mali, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Angola, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia,

Maldives, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Suriname, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Yemen

Draft amendment A/76/L.34/Rev.1 was rejected by 60 votes to 42, with 49 abstentions.

The Acting President: Since the draft amendment contained in document A/76/L.34/Rev.1 is not adopted, we shall now proceed to take action on draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1.

In the absence of a request for a recorded vote on the draft amendment, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft amendment contained in document A/76/L.33/Rev.1?

I give the floor to those representatives who have asked to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): May I correct your assertion, Mr. President, that no one requested a vote on the draft amendment (A/76/L.33/Rev.1) submitted by the delegation of the Dominican Republic. The Russian delegation did, as I said in my statement. The draft amendment is unacceptable to us, and that is why we have asked for a vote on it.

Mr. Komara (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I should like to draw your attention, Mr. President, to the fact that owing to a technical problem, my delegation was not able to participate in the voting.

The Acting President: A recorded vote has been requested on draft amendment A/76/L.34/Rev.1.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica,

Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Against:

Belarus, Burundi, Cambodia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, India, Libya, Mali, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Senegal, Serbia, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen

Draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1 was adopted by 86 votes to 18, with 45 abstentions.

The Acting President: Since the draft amendment contained in document A/76/L.33/Rev.1 is adopted, we shall now proceed to take action on draft decision A/76/L.31, as amended.

The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/76/L.31, entitled "Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes", as amended.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of the Russian Federation on a point of order.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to request a vote on A/76/L.31, as amended.

The Acting President: A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Cambodia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, India, Libya, Mali, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Senegal, Serbia, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, Haiti, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, United

Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen

Draft decision A/76/L.31, as amended, was adopted by 92 votes to 18, with 41 abstentions (decision 76/552).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Djibouti and Haiti informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

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

Mr. Wallace (Jamaica): I have the honour to deliver this statement in explanation of vote on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM attaches very high importance to this process and, as a result, wishes to reiterate our commitment to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate a convention on the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes for adoption at the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly.

We deeply regret the turn of events that have resulted in the inability of the Committee to engage in its first negotiating session from 17 to 28 January 2022, as agreed, and the need for the reconsideration of arrangements to limit the loss of momentum in the advancement of deliberations on the future convention. While we understand the circumstances giving rise to these new considerations, we underscore that this process must be grounded in equity and inclusivity, ensuring the legitimacy of the process as truly multilateral.

Therefore, it is in good faith that CARICOM member States supported the revised amendment to decision 76/552, which was presented by the Dominican Republic and which takes a practical approach to the situation in the absence of specific information on the availability of meeting rooms in New York for the proposed period. We maintain our position that every effort must be made to convene the first session in New York by 18 April 2022 before any further consideration is given to hosting this session in Vienna.

CARICOM would like to reiterate our concerns about the difficulties of participating in Vienna, where

none of our countries are represented. Member States would agree that the first session is of particular importance and sets the tone for the negotiations.

We take this opportunity to remind the General Assembly of paragraph 13 of resolution 75/282, on the modalities of the process. It reads:

“Urges Member States to provide voluntary extrabudgetary financial contributions to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to ensure funding to enable the participation of representatives of developing countries, especially those that do not have resident representation in Vienna, in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, including by covering their travel costs and accommodation expenses”.

We also remind Member States of the undertakings made in that regard at the time of adoption of the modalities.

CARICOM looks forward to the convening of a one-day meeting in New York in the near future to concretize outstanding organizational matters so that the Committee can continue its engagements, with equitable representation, in its informal and intersessional consultations.

Mr. Kayalar (Turkey): At the outset, we would like to thank the delegation of the Dominican Republic for trying to find common ground vis-à-vis the divergence of opinion on the rescheduling of Ad Hoc Committee meeting, which resulted from a force majeure.

We would like to clarify that Turkey does not oppose the necessary postponement and rescheduling of Committee sessions. Yet the singling out of a one-day and the separation of that meeting from the main session has caused concern. We would like to underline that the decision on the participation of other relevant stakeholders is a matter of substance that should not be addressed against the background of procedural rules alone.

Ms. Fitri (Indonesia): My delegation takes the floor to explain its position on the adoption of the proposals today under agenda item 109.

My delegation places high importance on the work of the Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate a convention with the aim to address the critical need to tackle global threats posed by criminal groups misusing information and communications technology platforms.

Our delegation was ready to start our work this month, as previously planned. Unfortunately, as the Secretariat’s ability to provide conference services and facilities was impacted by coronavirus disease cases, many United Nations meetings, including the Ad Hoc Committee, had to be rescheduled.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to thank the Ad Hoc Committee Chair, Her Excellency Ms. Faouzia Boumaiza Mebarki of Algeria, for her tireless efforts in leading the Committee to explore options and find possible solutions through various informal consultations in a transparent and inclusive manner. She has our delegation’s full support in the discharge of her duties. We also thank the Russian Federation, the Dominican Republic and Belarus for their proposals. We see merits in all the proposals, which demonstrates that all of us attach great interest to this process. We see those proposals as efforts to provide certainty and predictability towards starting our work as soon as possible, while ensuring that all Member States can participate equally and safely and be well-prepared.

My delegation also wishes to reiterate the importance of inclusive consultations to decide the way forward for the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. As we embark on a long journey, it is important that we get off on the right foot and aim for a consensus decision, and we regret that the General Assembly was not able to adopt a decision by consensus today.

It is for that reason that my delegation believes that the consultation process was cut short and that a consensual decision was still possible, guided by the reality of the pandemic situations and informed by the advice of the local authorities and the Secretariat. My delegation therefore abstained in the voting on documents A/76/L.33/Rev.1 and A/76/L.34/Rev.1 due to the limited time frame provided to Member States to consider those proposals thoroughly and inclusively, which prevented us from reaching a consensual decision.

However, in the spirit of flexibility, and in order to lend predictability to our working plan moving forward, my delegation will go along with the adoption of document A/76/L.31, as amended and decided by the whole membership.

We stand ready to engage with all Member States in moving forward with our work together in the Ad Hoc Committee in a more constructive manner.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We take note of the decision of the General Assembly. Nonetheless, we had to vote against our own draft, as amended, for several reasons.

The consensus decision of the General Assembly on holding an official meeting in line with the adopted decisions was, de facto, made dependent on a number of criteria, including health conditions and availability of space. In other words, it depended on particular conditions, including the availability of space. That is new to us and our practice.

Yesterday in this Hall, as we were considered the priorities of the President of the General Assembly for the seventy-sixth session, the Russian representative asked him to call a briefing expeditiously on questions regarding the business continuity of the General Assembly. Indeed, we see a serious contradiction between the real epidemiological situation in the city and the policies adopted by the Secretariat.

In his agenda, the President of the General Assembly mentioned the agenda for hope, but we would like to act instead. We have had enough hoping. We would like the Assembly to be the master of its own house, which, sadly, we have not seen.

Ms. Ighil (Algeria): I take the floor to explain my delegation's vote on draft decision A/76/L.31 and draft amendment A/76/L.33/Rev.1.

The position expressed by the Algerian delegation flows from several elements.

First, Algeria is committed to implement the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on Cybercrime,

clearly defined by resolution 74/247 — to elaborate a comprehensive international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes.

Second, Algeria is committed to the early commencement of the Ad Hoc Committee on Cybercrime, in accordance with resolution 75/282, taking into account the importance of the topic at hand.

Thirdly, there is a need to achieve consensual decisions among the Member States as the appropriate way to ensure the success of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. In that respect and taking into consideration the current pandemic situation and its impact on the calendar of meetings in the United Nations Headquarters in New York, my delegation is convinced that the promotion of consensual decisions, beyond any other consideration, would have been the appropriate way forward — not only to preserve the safety of delegations, but also to keep the positive momentum generated by the recent informal consultations held in Vienna.

We see this as an opportunity to call on all Member States to promote both procedural and substantive future consensual decisions. Such an approach would undoubtedly enhance our collective efforts to come up with positive outcomes that satisfy the expectations of the international community in that regard.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 109.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.