



# General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

**3**<sup>rd</sup> plenary meeting  
Friday, 16 September 2022, 11 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Körösi ..... (Hungary)

*The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.*

## Agenda item 7 (continued)

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

#### First report of the General Committee (A/77/250)

**The President:** I invite the General Assembly to direct its attention to section I of the report of the Committee. In that section, the Committee took note of the information contained in paragraph 2.

I now request the General Assembly to direct its attention to section II of the report of the Committee, entitled "Organization of the session", which contains a number of recommendations concerning the General Committee, the rationalization of work, the opening and closing dates of the session, the general debate, the conduct of the meetings, and so forth. Allow me to flag a few points for members' consideration.

In paragraph 34, the General Committee draws to the attention of the Assembly that the general debate will begin on Tuesday, 20 September, and recommends that it continue on Saturday, 24 September 2022. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the information contained in paragraph 34 and approves the recommendation that the general debate continue on Saturday, 24 September 2022?

*It was so decided (decision 77/502).*

**The President:** In paragraph 50, the General Committee brings to the attention of the Assembly information on rights of reply to addresses made by Heads of State. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information provided?

*It was so decided (decision 77/503).*

**The President:** I believe it would be beneficial to address all the remaining organizational matters concerning the General Assembly as a whole. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information and to approve all the recommendations of the Committee contained in section II of the report as a whole?

*It was so decided (decision 77/504).*

**The President:** I now invite members to turn their attention to section III, dealing with the adoption of the agenda. The question of the allocation of items will be dealt with subsequently in section IV.

In section III, the Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 87 to 89.

In paragraph 90, in connection with item 35 of the draft agenda, entitled "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte", the Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading B, on the understanding that there would be no consideration of this item by the General Assembly. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided (decision 77/505).*

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**The President:** In paragraph 91, in connection with item 56 of the draft agenda, entitled “Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India”, the Committee decided to recommend that consideration of the item be deferred to the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly and that the item be included in the provisional agenda of that session. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** In paragraph 92, in connection with item 61 of the draft agenda, entitled “Use of the veto”, the Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading B. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** In paragraph 93, in connection with item 62 of the draft agenda, entitled “Zone of peace, trust and cooperation of Central Asia”, the Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading B. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** In paragraph 94, in connection with item 135 of the draft agenda, entitled “Report of the United Nations Youth Office”, the Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** In paragraph 95, in connection with item 178 of the draft agenda, entitled “Observer Status for the Digital Cooperation Organization in the General Assembly”, the Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** In paragraph 96, in connection with item 179 of the draft agenda, entitled “Observer status for the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization in the General Assembly”, the Committee decided to recommend its inclusion under heading I. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We shall now turn to the agenda recommended by the Committee in paragraph 97 of its

report for adoption by the General Assembly, taking into account the decisions just adopted with respect to the draft agenda.

Bearing in mind that the agenda is organized under nine headings, we shall consider the inclusion of items under each heading as a whole. I should like to remind members once again that, at present, we are not discussing the substance of any item.

Items 1 and 2 have already been dealt with. We shall now turn to items 3 to 8. May I take it that these items are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We turn now to the inclusion of the items listed under heading A, “Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences”. May I take it that the items listed under heading A are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We turn now to heading B, “Maintenance of international peace and security”. May I take it that the items listed under heading B are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Next, we turn to heading C, “Development of Africa”. May I take it that the item listed under that heading is included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Now we come to heading D, “Promotion of human rights”. May I take it that the items listed under heading D are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Heading E is entitled “Effective co-ordination of humanitarian assistance efforts”. May I take it that the item listed under that heading is included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Next, we turn to heading F, “Promotion of justice and international law”. May I take it that the items listed under heading F are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Now we turn to heading G, “Disarmament”. May I take it that the items listed under that heading are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Heading H is entitled “Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations”. May I take it that the items listed under that heading are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Lastly, we turn to heading I, “Organizational, administrative and other matters”. May I take it that the items listed under heading I are included in the agenda?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We turn now to section IV of the report of the General Committee, on the allocation of items. The Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 98 to 100.

We shall now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 102 to 105. We shall take up the recommendations paragraph by paragraph. Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers cited here refer to the agenda in paragraph 97 of the report of the Committee before us.

We shall now turn to sub-paragraphs 102 (a) to (j), relating to a number of plenary items. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information that the Committee took note of and approve all of the recommendations of the Committee contained in sub-paragraphs 102 (a) to (j)?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We turn now to paragraph 103, relating to the First Committee. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve the recommendation of the General Committee contained in paragraph 103?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We turn now to sub-paragraphs 104 (a) to (c), relating to the Fifth Committee. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve all of the recommendations of the General Committee contained in sub-paragraphs 104 (a) to (c)?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We turn now to sub-paragraphs 105 (a) and (b), relating to the Sixth Committee. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve all of the recommendations of the General Committee contained in sub-paragraphs 105 (a) and (b)?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We shall now turn to paragraph 106 of the report of the General Committee, on the allocation of items to the plenary and to each Main Committee.

I will first turn to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed for consideration in plenary meeting?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We come next to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the First Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We turn now to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We come now to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Second Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** We turn now to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee under all the relevant headings.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Third Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Next we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Fifth Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Lastly, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Sixth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Sixth Committee?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their cooperation.

I would now like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the Holy See, in its capacity as an observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolution 58/314, of 1 July 2004, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/58/871, the Holy See, in its capacity as an observer State, will participate in the work of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

I would also like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolutions 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974, 43/177, of 15 December 1988, 52/250, of 7 July 1998, and 67/19, of 29 November 2012, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002, the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, will participate in the work of the

seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

In addition, I would like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with resolution 65/276, of 3 May 2011, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/65/856, representatives of the European Union will participate in the work of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

#### **Agenda item 7 (continued)**

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

##### **Draft decision (A/77/L.1)**

##### **Draft amendment (A/77/L.2)**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine to introduce draft decision A/77/L.1.

**Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine):** I would like to introduce draft decision A/77/L.1, entitled “General debate of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly in September 2022”. The draft decision was submitted by a core group of States and co-sponsored by more than 50 Member States. It aims at creating the conditions for President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine to avail himself of the right to address the General Assembly in the most extraordinary of circumstances — Russia’s ongoing aggression against his country.

However, we profoundly regret that Russia’s war will not allow our President to participate in person at this year’s fully in-person, post-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) general debate. The draft decision specifically refers to the reasons preventing in-person participation at the meetings of the General Assembly, such as foreign invasion, aggression, military hostilities or the need for leaders to discharge their national defence and security duties and functions.

According to the Constitution of Ukraine, the President is the guarantor of State sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Those duties have been of vital importance since

24 February — the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. President Zelenskyy must now be, and is, with the army of Ukraine. Such has been the case with his recent trip to the front line, including the city of Izyum, liberated a week ago from its Russian invaders.

President Zelenskyy has a lot to say to the General Assembly for the first time since Russia's unjustified and unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February, which has caused enormous devastation and tens of thousands of victims among civilians and is still ongoing. And there is much interest among the United Nations membership to hear directly from President Zelenskyy in the General Assembly Hall. We have had dozens of queries from many foreign leaders who are eagerly looking forward to hearing the words of the leader of my heroic nation. We once again regret that the President of Ukraine will not join us in person. But I am sure that most leaders in their capacity as Commanders-in-Chief were faced with choice to defend their nations from the active phase of a foreign invasion, they would be with their people.

The draft decision was drafted carefully in order to allow — without setting a precedent for future general debates and mandated high-level meetings planned for future high-level weeks — for President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine to submit a pre-recorded statement to be played in the General Assembly Hall during the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. While putting this draft decision forward, we are not introducing changes to existing rules, as was the case during the COVID-19 period, but asking to take into account a very specific set of circumstances.

Against that backdrop, I would like to ask members of the Assembly to support the adoption of draft decision A/77/L.1 in its initial version, as submitted by the core group of Member States, and vote against any attempt to undermine it or its adoption. We count on members' support.

**The President:** I now give the floor to representative of Belarus to introduce the draft amendment contained in document A/77/L.2.

**Mr. Makarevich** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus has always strictly abided by the rules of procedure and methods of work of the General Assembly. We believe that the rules should be binding on all States Members of the United Nations. We are sympathetic to the fact that some delegations have

already encountered potential obstacles to planning their participation at the general debate during the high-level week. In that regard, we believe that it would be reasonable to offer the possibility of remote participation at this session, on an exceptional basis, to any Member State that wishes to avail itself of that option. In considering the well-reasoned arguments by certain delegations with regard to draft decision A/77/L.1, introduced by our Ukrainian colleagues, we deem it to be more judicious and fair to adopt it as amended. It seems that such an approach would be in the interests of all States.

**The President:** We will now proceed to consider draft decision A/77/L.1 and draft amendment A/77/L.2.

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

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Before we proceed to take a decision on draft decision A/77/L.1 and draft amendment A/77/L.2, delegations wishing to make a statement in the explanation of vote before the voting on the draft decision and/or the draft amendment are invited to do so now in one intervention.

Before giving the floor for explanations of vote before 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. Tan** (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada takes the floor today to urge fellow Member States to reject the hostile draft amendment contained in document A/77/L.2, proposed by Belarus, to draft decision A/77/L.1, submitted by Ukraine together with 53 sponsors. The draft decision before the Assembly today seeks to grant a very specific exception for a very exceptional circumstance. Like the other sponsors of the draft decision, we believe that the specific situation



of Ukraine warrants such an exception, which we will support and call on others to support.

*(spoke in English)*

All Member States recall the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session, when the coronavirus disease forced the move to video statements from leaders. We also recall the shared desire to return to in-person diplomacy, with all of the intangible benefits it delivers. We do not want to return to a general debate of watching pre-recorded statements. We want to operate according to our rules of procedure, which is why we believe exceptions should be rare, with each specific request for an exception considered on its own merits.

Canada does not believe that Belarus has proposed the draft amendment before the Assembly in good faith. It proposes to amend paragraph (a) by removing any reference to foreign invasion, aggression and military hostilities and the reference to resolution ES-11/1, which deplored in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations and was supported by 141 Member States. We recall that paragraph 10 of the resolution, which Belarus does not want to reference,

“Deplores the involvement of Belarus in this unlawful use of force against Ukraine, and calls upon it to abide by its international obligations.”

Nearly seven months later, Belarus continues to allow its territory to be used for unlawful Russian attacks on Ukraine. The amendments to paragraph (a) seek to erase Ukraine from the picture, just as the Russian Federation, aided by a complicit Belarus, is trying to erase Ukraine from the map.

In paragraph (a) of the draft decision, Belarus proposes to erase Ukraine and replace it with,

“any Member State or Observer State facing the situation described above.”

We would be willing to consider separate draft decisions on individual exceptions that other Member States may wish to put forward to address their specific circumstances. However, we will not support Belarus’ or Russia’s efforts to erase Ukraine from the draft decision or from existence. We will vote against the draft amendment and in favour of the draft decision, and we urge all Member States who support the Charter of the United Nations to join us.

**Mr. Makarevich** (Belarus) *(spoke in Russian)*: I would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that the draft amendment contained in document A/77/L.2 was circulated yesterday and that invoking the relevant provision of rule 78 seems questionable to us.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: We just adopted the recommendations of the General Committee on the modalities of the work of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. They clearly stipulate that the statements made at the general debate of the General Assembly must be delivered by the representatives of Member States in person in this Hall. However, just minutes following their adoption, we are called upon to adopt draft decision A/77/L.1 to grant one of the 193 world leaders the exclusive right of presenting a pre-recorded video statement.

Where are the logic and consistency in that? We see them only in the fact that yet another attempt is being made to ensure special treatment for Kyiv, as if we had forgotten about sovereign equality among all United Nations Member States. Furthermore, as we heard from the representative of Canada, our Western colleagues want to adopt a politicized draft decision on a procedural issue. They just openly said so.

One does not have to go all the way to Kyiv to find such examples of special treatment. In the Security Council, on three occasions, Western countries have already pushed for the President of Ukraine to be allowed to speak via video-teleconference, despite the fact that representatives of African countries who often encounter as many difficulties in travelling to New York have been repeatedly denied such a right.

As members of the General Assembly know, we have always consistently advocated — and will continue to advocate — for in-person diplomacy at the United Nations. However, the main issue now hardly concerns the fact that some are trying to return to a virtual format for the upcoming high-level week, but that they are trying to do so for the sake of one single country, while chalking up obvious political points through the procedural draft decision. That sets a very bad precedent for all of us. Notwithstanding the approach to virtual diplomacy considered in draft amendment A/77/L.2, proposed by Belarus, we believe that, if the General Assembly is considering the possibility of showing pre-recorded statements at the general debate at this stage, that should be available to everyone who requires it, not only Ukraine.

The Belarus draft amendment precisely suggests that all Heads of delegation who are unable to participate in person in the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session for reasons beyond their control preventing them from safely leaving their country or fulfilling their national security and defence responsibilities will have such an opportunity at the general debate. We are grateful to our Belarusian colleagues for defending the principle of inclusiveness and equality among all United Nations Members.

Once again, I want to make it clear that, if the draft amendment proposed by Belarus is adopted, representatives of any State requiring it, not just Mr. Zelenskyy, will be able to address us remotely. However, that will not be done at the expense of the rights of other States, as in the case of the Ukrainian draft decision. We call on all those who share the principles of the sovereign equality of States and oppose the politicization of procedural decisions of the General Assembly to support the Belarusian draft amendment.

**Mr. Guerra Sansonetti** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow us to begin our intervention by reiterating the firm commitment of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to upholding the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The text contained in document A/77/L.1, which was presented to us today, constitutes a new attempt to instrumentalize the General Assembly in order to move forward in an increasingly frequent and destructive practice that is of great concern to my country. It is group unilateralism in which certain countries continue today to yearn for neocolonial domination. By exacerbating differences and setting forth divergent agendas and visions, they seek to divide the international community into distinct political blocs.

In that context, we reiterate that the United Nations is an intergovernmental organization based, inter alia, on the principle of the sovereign equality of States. The Organization is not a private club. The principle of one-country, one-vote is the cornerstone of the United Nations and of multilateralism as a whole. There is no room for supposed exceptionalism. Therefore, while we reject this political manoeuvre, we believe that the text, which was presented to us today under the guise of a procedural matter, includes significant substantive elements that, if adopted in this Hall today, would set a dangerous precedent by which the General Assembly will have flagrantly violated the principle of legal equality among States, which is, moreover, the *raison*

d'être of this principal organ of the United Nations — in addition to forcing through a new General Assembly decision on a substantive issue on which, as everyone knows, there is no consensus.

It is for the reasons that we just mentioned that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela resolutely supports the changes proposed in draft amendment A/77/L.2, submitted by the delegation of Belarus, which are aimed at preserving the fundamental purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations — the guiding light of the Organization. We call on responsible members of the international community to vote in favour of the amendments contained in document A/77/L.2 in order to allow all delegations the possibility of sending pre-recorded messages to be shown at the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session, without discrimination or any form of bias, distinction or exclusion.

**Mr. Reed** (United Kingdom): I take the floor to provide the United Kingdom's views on Belarus' draft amendments, contained in document A/77/L.2, but first let us be clear on why we are even having this discussion. It is because Russia invaded its neighbour, and, for that reason, Ukraine's President cannot travel to New York for the general debate. As a country that is assisting in that invasion, as my Canadian colleague just said, Belarus is clearly not introducing its draft amendments in good faith.

While the United Kingdom supports a return to normal in the general debate in the aftermath of the coronavirus disease, with in-person statements from Heads of delegations, we must recognize that, for the members of one delegation that is dealing with an invasion by their own neighbour, it may not be possible to travel. In such a scenario, it is only right that we consider an exception without setting a precedent for the future.

But these exceptions should be granted on an exceptional basis. Let me be clear: there is nothing exclusive about that right. While we support draft decision A/77/L.1, introduced by Ukraine, that does not stop any other Member State bringing forward their own draft resolution if its leader has reasons not to travel to New York — for example, owing to a natural disaster. Let the General Assembly consider each case on its merits. Despite what others here would have us believe, the draft decision proposed to the Assembly is the exact opposite of unilateralism. For that reason, we

will vote against Belarus's amendments, and we urge others to do the same.

**Mr. Morales Dávila** (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): While it is true that the General Assembly has the de jure and de facto capacity to consider crucial and urgent issues affecting the international community in order to adopt concrete resolutions and to respond to the most varied exigencies of the complicated world in which we live, we note with concern proposed draft decision A/77/L.1, as it reflects a clear tendency veering towards exceptionalism and exclusivity that politicizes, obstructs and undermines the work of the General Assembly, while violating the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.

We must be inclusive, strengthen multilateralism, uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter, address the legitimate concerns of many delegations and ensure the sovereign equality of all States, which is vital to the work of the United Nations. It is imperative that we end double standards at the United Nations and imposed measures, such as the proposed draft decision, which impede constructive dialogue among nations.

Nicaragua believes that certain Member States must refrain from trying to turn the Organization into a tool for carrying out their selfish exclusionary agendas, which neither benefit or contribute to multilateralism or inclusiveness within the United Nations membership.

In conclusion, our delegation would like to state its principled position on the sovereign equality of States and the non-discrimination of United Nations decisions and resolutions vis-à-vis all Members in order to truly leave no one behind. For those reasons, Nicaragua co-sponsored draft amendment A/77/L.2, proposed by Belarus, for which we are grateful and which hope will be supported.

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

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

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): At this stage, I should like to address the additional sponsors of draft decision A/77/L.1 and draft amendment A/77/L.2.

First, I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft decision, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following

countries have also become sponsors of A/77/L.1: Andorra, Liechtenstein, New Zealand and Switzerland.

I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft amendment, and in addition to the delegations listed on the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft amendment A/77/L.2: Nicaragua, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

**The President:** Before we proceed to take a decision on draft decision A/77/L.1, in accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the Assembly shall first take a decision on draft amendment A/77/L.2.

A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Belarus, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Eritrea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Namibia, Nicaragua, Peru, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Syrian Arab Republic

*Against:*

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Vanuatu

*Abstaining:*

Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Chile, El Salvador, Ghana, Guyana, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal,



Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Yemen

*Draft amendment A/77/L.2 was rejected by 67 votes to 23, with 27 abstentions.*

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

**The President:** Since draft amendment A/77/L.2 was not adopted, we shall proceed to take a decision on draft decision A/77/L.1.

A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen

*Against:*

Belarus, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic

*Abstaining:*

Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burundi, China, El Salvador, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Malaysia, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan

*Draft decision A/77/L.1 was adopted by 101 votes to 7, with 19 abstentions (decision 77/506).*

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

**The President:** Before giving the floor for explanations 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. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*):** Mexico is in favour of promoting the participation of all Member States in the General Assembly and recognizes the extraordinary circumstances that Heads of State or Government might face this year, and that certainly includes the President of Ukraine, to participate in the general debate to be held next week. Since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine, my delegation has supported President Zelenskyy's ability to address members of the Security Council via video-teleconference.

Although we agree that it would not be necessary to limit the reasons that would allow Heads of State or Government to address the Security Council remotely as a result of force majeure, we regret that, for both the original document of decision 77/506 and the draft amendments (A/77/L.2), there was no inclusive consultation process to enable an adequate exchange of views among our delegations. The haste with which the General Assembly has had to address this matter undermines our working methods and is contrary to the spirit of dialogue that should characterize this universal organ in reaching consensus on a sensitive matter.

Therefore, we believe that, in the light of the experience and best practices of the two years of the pandemic, and recognizing that our working methods can be improved and that, de facto, new precedents have been established, we should discuss this topic, that is, remote participation of Heads of State and Government, in the Ad Hoc Working Group on Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Pedros Cuesta (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*):** Cuba defends strict respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law in all circumstances. We

also stress the fact that the rules of procedure of the General Assembly should be adhered to at all times.

Decision 77/506, which was submitted to the Assembly as an alleged procedural matter, aims to make the Assembly take a decision on a substantive issue on which it is widely known that there is no consensus. The good faith that should prevail in relations among Member States is being undermined. Substantive differences of position should not be transferred to decisions that by their nature should be strictly procedural. This is a clearly politicized manoeuvre that damages multilateralism, the credibility of our Organization and the international community.

The negative precedent that is set by a decision such as the one that has been adopted should not be downplayed. Exceptional rights are being provided to one Member State, eliminating any possibility for other States to benefit from such a provision. That runs counter to the principle of sovereign equality and the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

Cuba would have undoubtedly supported a procedural decision to facilitate the virtual exceptional participation in the general debate of representatives of any Member State, without any kind of distinction, which as a result of force majeure and under specific circumstances were not able to come to the General Assembly in person. However, clearly, that is not the aim of the document that was submitted to us.

For those reasons, the delegation of Cuba voted in favour of draft amendment A/77/L.2, put forward by Belarus, and against decision 77/506.

**Mr. Dangor** (South Africa): The upcoming general debate of the General Assembly is the first fully open Assembly since the start of the coronavirus disease pandemic. In the context of the need to reaffirm the importance of multilateralism with the United Nations at its core, the general debate is the primary platform to do so.

It is for that reason that South Africa supports the full participation of all Member States, including observer States, in this year's general debate. No voice should be excluded unless, of course, a State is suspended for participation in the General Assembly for gross transgressions of the provisions and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, as was the case with the apartheid Government of South Africa in 1974 for its transgression of the crime of apartheid.

Ideally, the Assembly would benefit from the physical presence of the representatives of all Member and observer States. Circumstances, however, may make physical participation a challenge. We should therefore strive to use all available means to allow for all delegations to participate, including through virtual means, under exceptional circumstances and without setting a precedent.

South Africa would have preferred that decision 77/506, which was submitted today, would have included language addressing this matter without the politicization of a purely procedural matter. The politicization of procedural matters, and the inability for us to reach consensus at the start of the new General Assembly session, does not portend well for the rest of session. We, as members of the Assembly, have a responsibility to work together towards achieving consensus. If we cannot even agree on procedural matters, how will we be able to reach consensus and agreement on the pressing global challenges that we face?

As participants in the Assembly of humankind, we have an obligation to all our people to work together moving forward. It is in that context that South Africa voted in favour of the draft amendments that would have given rise to a decision that dealt with the participation of all Member States, including in this case Ukraine. It is unfortunate that the recommended draft amendments were not agreed to. We do not agree that the proposed amendments to the decision were hostile, and it is unfortunate that it was characterized as being so. In our view, they reaffirm the sovereign equality of all Member States. The nature of the debate today leads to further polarization of the international community at a time when we should be working together to end conflicts in Ukraine and elsewhere.

Despite the draft amendments not being adopted, we were nonetheless considering voting for the unchanged decision solely to express our support for inclusive participation, including in this case of Ukraine. However, because of the manner in which States supporting an unchanged decision engaged in the debate this morning, we had no choice but to abstain, as the debate served to further polarize the international community.

**Mr. Ghadirkhomi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I take the floor in order to explain the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran on decision 77/506, which was just adopted. Iran reiterates its position on the current

conflict in Ukraine, as explained during the meeting of the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly held on 2 March (see A/ES-11/PV.5).

My Government, as one of the founding Members of the United Nations, highly values the work of the General Assembly as the main international forum and organ for deliberative discussions and decision-making. We also stress that, in line with the traditions of the General Assembly, the Assembly's high-level segment has a noble role in bringing the leaders of the world together to represent their nations and share their views on the common global changes that we face.

In that regard, we emphasize that all Member States and their officials, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, shall have equal rights and privileges for presentation. More engagement by leaders would lead to more prosperous results. As such, we recall the responsibility of the host country in the facilitation of that process.

Meanwhile, we reiterate that, in preparation for that moment and its logistics, the United Nations shall avoid politicizing its voice based on the selective interests of geographical regions or discriminating methods. In that regard, we regret that, in preparation for decision 77/506, Member States found neither a timely nor appropriate opportunity to discuss the decision, and neither was an inclusive or appropriate practice for the equal participation of Member States in the high-level week of the General Assembly incorporated in the decision.

With that understanding, my delegation voted in favour of the draft amendments contained in document A/77/L.2 submitted by the delegation of Belarus, and we believe that those amendments were a reasonable solution to improve the decision and to facilitate the equal participation of Member States in the high-level week of the General Assembly. It was unfortunate that the draft amendments did not find their way to the final decision.

We note that, since the establishment of the United Nations, many other countries engaged in conflicts have utilized the high-level week of the General Assembly to present their opinions through participation at the ministerial level, which is an option that could be considered for all other Member States.

**Mr. Vidal (Chile):** Chile regrets the victims of the brutal war that is taking place in Ukraine, which has violated norms of international law, international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Chile is a country that is in favour of multilateralism. We believe that disputes between States should be resolved within the relevant bodies in line with the relevant standards. The multilateral system is everyone's home.

We know that the situation in Ukraine is very serious, and we hope that it will cease and that we do not reach seven months of conflict next week. However, international peace and security are also under threat in other areas, and we think that those Heads of State or Government who are not able to leave their countries should have an equal opportunity to address the general debate of the General Assembly.

Our vote in favour of decision 77/506 and this explanation of vote reflect our commitment to the consistent implementation of the promotion and respect of human rights under all circumstances and at all times. Chile once again calls on all parties to continue their talks, and we once again urge that an immediate and peaceful solution to the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine be reached through political dialogue, negotiations, mediation and other peaceful means in line with international law.

**Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil):** Brazil abstained in the voting on decision 77/506, after voting in favour of draft amendment A/77/L.2, which was proposed by Belarus. We agree that any Head of State facing exceptional difficulties should be allowed to participate in the general debate through a pre-recorded statement. We regret, however, that the original language unnecessarily politicized what should be a procedural issue. Otherwise, many more Member States would have agreed on the issue and the sovereign equality of States would be clearly preserved.

**The 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 7.

*The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.*