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Chair: Mr. Marschik (Austria)
later: Ms. Bananken Elel (Cameroon)

Contents

Agenda item 24: Social development (*continued*)

- (b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, persons with disabilities and the family (*continued*)

Agenda item 25: Advancement of women (*continued*)

- (a) Advancement of women

Agenda item 70: Right of peoples to self-determination (*continued*)Agenda item 71: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

- (b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*)

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

Agenda item 24: Social development (continued)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, persons with disabilities and the family (continued) (A/C.3/78/L.15/Rev.1, A/C.3/78/L.16/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.15/Rev.1: Preparations for and observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

1. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.
2. **Mr. González Behmaras** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text was primarily based on the resolution adopted by consensus the previous year. Social development was a key issue that should be guided by the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the objectives of the International Year of the Family, whose thirtieth anniversary would be celebrated the following year. The draft resolution invited States, the United Nations and all interested parties to promote that important event. Family-oriented policies and programmes were a tool for combating poverty, exclusion and inequality, thereby serving to advance the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. His delegation hoped that the Committee would continue to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.
3. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Russian Federation had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.
4. *Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.15/Rev.1 was adopted.*
5. **Ms. Reyna** (Mexico) said that families were central to the composition of populations and the creation of social bonds. However, the concept of family was also subject to societal evolutions, whether of an economic, cultural or demographic nature. In Mexico, diverse forms of families were identified and protected, which included grandparents, adopted relatives, divorced persons and same-sex couples. Therefore, it was regrettable that the draft resolution had not provided details of diverse types of families, which were a reality in many parts of the world.
6. Her delegation welcomed the inclusion in the draft resolution of the topic of migration, which created a unique set of challenges and could lead to the separation of and changes of dynamics within families. Such inclusion served to recognize the resilience of

individuals and reaffirmed the importance of a sense of belonging and community. However, the lack of emphasis placed on family reunification was disappointing. Mexico joined consensus on the draft resolution, and clarified that all references to the term “family” therein were understood in the context of the diversity of families.

7. **Mr. Lang** (United States) said that the multilateral system was an important vehicle for promoting respect for and protection of human rights worldwide, which must take all individuals into consideration. While the United States would join consensus on the draft resolution, it was disappointing that consensus language from the fifty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council proactively recognizing all families had not been included in the text. His delegation was concerned that the draft resolution once again promoted narrow visions of the family that impeded gender equality, undermined the rights of women and girls and excluded LGBTQI+ persons and their roles and families.

8. Language should be included to acknowledge that diverse families existed everywhere in the world, which was not a politicized statement, but rather a fact. Various family structures had always existed, and must be recognized and supported, including intergenerational households, adopted families and families headed by same-sex individuals. His delegation hoped that the text for the following year, and all events celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, would be inclusive of such diversity.

9. **Mr. Riva Grela** (Uruguay) said that the text had undergone a positive evolution during the negotiation process, with the inclusion of important references to effective, inclusive and resilient social protection systems and public services that addressed gender inequality. However, references to gender-based violence should be included, as it often originated within families, whose fundamental role was to protect women and girls. Families should also be recognized in all their diversity, which often served as the main basis for discrimination against them, impeding the full enjoyment of their rights. Resolutions relating to family must also address the various types of families that existed, including single-parent families and those headed by members of the LGBTQI+ community. Nonetheless, Uruguay supported the draft resolution, and recalled that the concepts of unity and diversity were fundamental to the United Nations.

10. **Ms. White** (United Kingdom) said that her Government attached great importance to family-related issues, as well as the need for inclusive and responsive family policies and strategies, gender-responsive social

protection systems to tackle family poverty, and special attention for families in vulnerable situations. Upholding the principle of family unity was key; therefore, the focus of the draft resolution on strengthening international cooperation on reunification policies was welcome. In that regard, the United Kingdom provided a safe and legal route to bring refugee families together with its refugee family reunion policy. However, the draft resolution could have been improved by acknowledging the immigration laws and systems of countries. In line with the fundamental principle of State sovereignty, States had the right to determine their own migration and immigration policies and laws. The United Kingdom recognized the need to consider the overall well-being of the family and the human rights of its individual members in the context of reunification policies. Under national law, immigration and nationality functions were also discharged while safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the United Kingdom. Therefore, taking into account the best interests of children was a primary consideration, but was not the only factor. Ahead of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, the United Kingdom was committed to an inclusive approach that considered the needs of all families, regardless of their composition.

11. **Ms. Mozgovaya** (Belarus) said that her delegation welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution and fully supported its purposes and principles. Strengthening the family as the main unit of society was crucial, including by increasing the social protection of families and disseminating traditional family values. Belarus was a co-chair of the upcoming thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, and remained committed to developing global cooperation on family issues and strengthening partnerships, including with United Nations entities, civil society, academia and the private sector. Her delegation invited States to consider joining the Group of Friends of the Family, with a view to developing coordinated measures to strengthen family-oriented strategies, as part of a holistic and comprehensive approach to development.

12. **Ms. Alonso Giganto** (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that families had the potential to strengthen societies and States should develop policies to support them in doing so. The European Union supported some of the new elements contained in the draft resolution, including investments in sustainable urbanization, the promotion of social protection systems for all, and the call to integrate a gender perspective in family-related policies. However, it was disappointing that the majority of its proposals had not been accepted, such as the inclusion

of quality education, gender-sensitive policies, measures to combat sexual and gender-based violence, intimate partner violence and the multiple interrelated forms of discrimination.

13. In the draft resolution, important language from the text of the previous year had been deleted, including on the balance of work and family life and on decent work. It was also regrettable that new language proposed by the European Union with regard to childcare, a child- and gender-sensitive approach, human rights and language from the Sustainable Development Goals on the provision of legal identity for all had not been included. Policies must be inclusive and respond to the evolving needs and expectations of families. Diverse forms of family existed within distinct cultural and political systems. Any references in the draft resolution to the term “family” were understood to reflect that fact. However, the new reference to the general well-being of families was unclear and did not recognize such diverse forms of family. A gender- and child-sensitive approach was also needed in the formulation of relevant policies, with full respect for human rights.

Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.16/Rev.1: Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

14. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

15. **Mr. González Behmaras** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text was primarily based on the draft resolution adopted by consensus the previous year. The question of social development should be guided in part by the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002. The draft resolution recognized the important contribution of older persons to societies and to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and reiterated that the international community should better respond to the challenges of ageing populations and ensure the dignity, well-being and the exercise of the rights of such persons. The Group hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

16. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Andorra, Austria, Croatia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Serbia and United States of America.

17. He then noted that Albania also wished to become a sponsor.

18. **Ms. Squeff** (Argentina) said that the draft resolution contained some new elements, including

recognition of care work for older persons in the light of the accelerated global trend of ageing of the population; encouragement of Member States to create an enabling environment for the equal, full, effective and meaningful participation of older persons in political, social, economic and cultural life; and the invitation for Member States to involve older persons in the discussions held under the auspices of the United Nations, by considering incorporating them into their national delegations. The draft resolution also expressed appreciation for the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and encouraged States to continue contributing towards its work. In that connection, all Member States should participate in the facilitation process led by Brazil and Portugal to identify possible gaps in protection of the human rights of older persons and optimal ways of addressing such gaps.

19. **Mr. Kashaev** (Russian Federation) said that his country attached great importance to care for older persons. The international community must strive to enhance cooperation in order to fully protect the rights and interests of that group, on the basis of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002 and with the contribution of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing. With respect to paragraph 66 of the draft resolution, introducing the practice of adopting intergovernmentally negotiated recommendations was premature, given the lack of consensus on basic issues. Such a step could paralyse discussions and threaten adoption of the outcome document of the Working Group. Therefore, his delegation dissociated itself from that paragraph.

20. *Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.16/Rev.1 was adopted.*

21. **Mr. Zumilla** (Malaysia) said that his country attached great importance to the issue of ageing and had joined consensus on the draft resolution. However, the terms “multiple and intersecting” in the nineteenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 27 would be interpreted on the basis of the national laws, values and customs of Malaysia, to the exclusion of any concepts that were inconsistent with the existing international human rights architecture.

Agenda item 25: Advancement of women (continued)

(a) Advancement of women (continued) (A/C.3/78/L.21/Rev.1, A/C.3/78/L.22/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.21/Rev.1: Violence against women migrant workers

22. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

23. **Mr. Lagdameo** (Philippines), speaking also on behalf of Indonesia, introducing the draft resolution, said that in 2021, the International Labour Organization had recorded that women migrant workers numbered over 69 million globally. While they often remained invisible, they positively contributed to national efforts towards poverty eradication and the pursuit of sustainable development. The draft resolution recognized the immense value of migrant workers, and sought to prevent and address the violence, discrimination and harassment they often faced. It highlighted the role of digital technology in increasing the risk of violence faced by women migrant workers; expressed concern that women migrants were more likely to face deplorable working conditions; encouraged States to address the inequalities that forced women to migrate; and called on Governments to establish zero-tolerance policies and measures with regard to all violence, harassment and related intolerance against women.

24. In terms of implementation of the draft resolution, the Philippines and Indonesia were aware of the challenges, as they had a combined migrant worker population of almost 14 million. While contributing to the development of origin and destination countries, thousands of women migrants experienced troubling conditions, and must not be left behind. All delegations that had not yet done so were encouraged to sponsor the draft resolution.

25. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Australia, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Guatemala, India, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, South Africa and Uruguay.

26. He then noted that the following delegations also wished to become sponsors: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Haiti, Jordan, Kiribati, Malawi, North Macedonia and Timor-Leste.

27. **Ms. Alonso Giganto** (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that the European Union remained fully committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of all women migrant workers and welcomed many new elements of the draft resolution, including on the high risk faced by women migrant workers in the context of trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation and the calls for investments in the Sustainable Development Goals to address the drivers of migration. However, it was regrettable that several language

proposals by the European Union had not been included in the text, including on gender-based violence and its impact on the physical and mental health of women migrant workers.

28. As in previous years, the draft resolution rightly reaffirmed the importance of access to comprehensive health services for women workers. Nonetheless, the European Union would have preferred an explicit reference to access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, as disruption to such services could severely impact people on the move, particularly women migrant workers. Recognition of the agreed conclusions of the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women in the draft resolution were welcome, as well as its expression of concern at the gender-based violence that occurred through or was amplified by the use of technology.

29. **Mr. Mohamed** (Egypt) said that his delegation welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution, which reflected the need to enhance international efforts to combat violence against migrants and uphold their rights. Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration was key in that regard. International efforts to regulate labour migration should be enhanced, with a view to meeting the demands of the labour market and to guaranteeing dignified and safe migration, together with the appropriate reception of migrants. Egypt maintained its position as expressed in previous sessions with regard to the paragraphs of the draft resolution that had not been updated. Furthermore, given the lack of international consensus on certain terminology, it would have been appropriate to replace the terms “multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination” with “all forms of discrimination”.

30. **Ms. Diouf** (Senegal) said that the draft resolution was fully aligned with collective efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the rights of women and girls, particularly migrant women. Violence, and particularly violence against women, should be collectively denounced, while also working to ensure the empowerment of women, their access to justice and an end to impunity. Senegal remained committed to combating all violence, particularly against women and girls and women migrants. According to the natural principles of freedom and equality acquired at birth, all Member States should treat migrants in a way that ensured the full enjoyment of their human rights and access to fair procedures. However, her delegation dissociated itself from the terms “multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination” and “marginalized groups of women” throughout the text. Furthermore, it was Senegal’s understanding that the concept of gender and any meaning that might be associated with it

referred only to social relations between men and women.

31. **Ms. Arab Bafrani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the protection of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons remained a high priority for her country, in addition to the protection of women, including migrant women. Her delegation joined consensus on the draft resolution; however, it dissociated itself from the thirty-first, thirty-second and thirty-sixth preambular paragraphs and paragraph 2, due to the inclusion of language that was not based on consensus. The Islamic Republic of Iran was a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants due to its geopolitics, demographics and economic opportunities. However, the position of her delegation on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which was not legally binding, remained the same as documented in United Nations records during the adoption of General Assembly resolution [73/195](#) (2019).

32. **Mr. Mahamadou Seydou** (Niger) said that the elimination of all forms of violence against women migrant workers was a priority for Niger, in line with its commitments under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. To ensure enhanced protection for all migrant workers, Niger had ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and adopted a law determining the fundamental principles of social protection, including for women migrant workers.

33. While it had joined consensus on the draft resolution, his delegation dissociated itself from the expression “multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination”. With regard to the reference to the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and other related documents, Niger could not approve the outcomes reached in those conferences, which had not been convened under the auspices of the General Assembly. On the general comments relating to the monitoring role of the United Nations treaty bodies, his delegation rejected any attempt at revisionist interpretations of the scope of conventional rights and obligations of States, and reiterated the importance of the sovereignty of States and the principle of consent in accordance with treaty rights. Furthermore, Niger did not support attempts to redefine or reinterpret the concept of gender outside of its ordinary and generally accepted meaning, which was limited to the biological difference between the male and female sexes. His delegation wished to apply its observations to all resolutions containing such references.

34. **Ms. Sánchez García** (Colombia) said that her delegation was proud to sponsor the draft resolution. The topic of women migrant workers should be considered in a holistic manner. While certain States had dissociated themselves from the terms “multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination”, the discrimination suffered by migrant women was multiple and intersectional in nature. They were discriminated against for being women and for being migrants, and in an exacerbated manner for being migrant women. The terms in question were both essential and central to the draft resolution, and the interpretations of delegations at the national level should not be to the detriment of elements that the Committee was striving to highlight.

35. *Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.21/Rev.1 was adopted.*

36. **Ms. Pongor** (Hungary) said that her country was committed to international human rights law in its national legislation on migration and to combating all forms of violence, particularly against women and girls. However, migration should not be qualified as a basic human right, and all States had the right to define their national migration policies and to tackle criminal human trafficking and smuggling networks, which exploited those in vulnerable situations. In particular, States should avoid facilitating or condoning illegal migration, which generated further opportunities for such exploitation. Instead of promoting migration as a solution for the marginalized, the international community should focus on addressing its root causes. Her delegation welcomed the elements of the draft resolution that encouraged States to invest in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals to address inequalities that might act as drivers of migration among women. However, given that Hungary had voted against the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, it dissociated itself from all paragraphs that mentioned the Compact and the International Migration Review Forum.

37. **Mr. Al-Khaqani** (Iraq) said that according to the legislation of his country, the concept and term “gender”, and any related terms, represented males and females. His delegation dissociated itself from any other interpretation, as well as any interpretation of intersectionality and diversity outside the context of males and females, as mentioned in the thirty-sixth preambular paragraph and paragraph 2. In addition, Iraq did not support the outcomes of the review conferences related to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which had not been carried out under the auspices of the General Assembly.

38. **Mr. Zumilla** (Malaysia) said that Malaysia was committed to the protection and promotion of the rights of women migrant workers, including through national welfare programmes for migrants, given that they played an important role in development. His delegation had therefore joined consensus on the draft resolution. However, interpretation of the term “multiple and intersecting forms” in the thirty-fifth preambular paragraph and paragraph 2 would be based on the national laws, values and customs of Malaysia, excluding any concepts that were inconsistent with the existing international human rights architecture.

39. **Ms. Corona** (Mexico) said that as a country of origin, transit, destination and return, Mexico was committed to the protection of the human rights of women migrant workers. In accordance with its feminist foreign policy, her country recognized the unique way in which the migration cycle affected women, and therefore renewed its efforts to transform the structures that impeded their progress and the full exercise of their rights. Her delegation joined consensus on the draft resolution with its full support, in the light of the national situation in her country, and welcomed the elements introduced on addressing violence against women migrant workers. Mexico also supported the references to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination suffered by women migrant workers, and would have welcomed references to the need to protect sexual and reproductive health, particularly given the high incidence of sexual assaults that occurred during the migration transit. Her delegation would continue, in future sessions, to advocate strengthening the draft resolution as a whole, with a view to protecting women migrant workers, in all their diversity, to the highest degree possible.

40. **Mr. Jaiteh** (Gambia) said that the Gambia had joined consensus on the draft resolution, reflecting its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, including the rights of women migrant workers. However, terms such as “multiple and intersecting forms” were not aligned with the values of the Gambia, which therefore rejected and dissociated itself from such terms.

41. **Mr. Hamed** (Libya) said that his delegation was not in agreement with the inclusion of non-consensual language, particularly the terms “multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination” in the thirty-fifth preambular paragraph. It also dissociated itself from interpretations of the term “gender” that diverged from the distinction between male and female, in accordance with the national laws and legislation of Libya.

Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.22/Rev.1: Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas

42. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

43. **Mr. Vorshilov** (Mongolia), introducing the draft resolution, said that rural women and girls were key to achieving virtually all of the Sustainable Development Goals and were crucial agents of change. While it had not been possible to renew the whole substance of the draft resolution, it had been updated with new language, including on gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and decision-making by women in the context of climate change, which were key to achieving sustainable development. Deep concern was also expressed that women were more food-insecure than men, accounting for 70 per cent of the world's hungry, despite contributing to over 50 per cent of the food produced worldwide. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis; ongoing effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; women's and girls' unequal share of unpaid care work; and unrest in various parts of the world had been underscored, stressing the need for Governments to support the rights of women and girls. Member States were also encouraged to enhance safe, accessible and inclusive digital connectivity in rural areas, to promote the access of rural women and girls to digital services and to close digital divides.

44. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Angola, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Canada, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Zimbabwe.

45. He then noted that the following delegations also wished to become sponsors: Albania, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Guyana, Haiti, Jordan, Kiribati, Malawi, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

46. **Ms. Asaju** (Nigeria) said that her delegation prioritized the advancement of women, particularly the improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural

areas. The references in the draft resolution to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights continued to be interpreted in accordance with the national laws of Nigeria, in line with international human rights obligations and as agreed in the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action and the Beijing Platform for Action. Nigeria dissociated itself from any ambiguous interpretation of discrimination in the text, particularly connotations that were not internationally agreed or not recognized in its domestic laws and policies. In the draft resolution and all other resolutions, the understanding and national interpretation of the term "gender" denoted biological males and females. Her delegation did not endorse any outcomes produced within conferences that had not been held under the auspices of the General Assembly, and requested caution against initiatives that departed from the carefully negotiated commitments made by States on the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

47. **Ms. Arab Bafrani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that her Government promoted the rights of all, particularly women and girls in urban and rural areas and nomadic women. To that end, it had implemented several development programmes related to capacity-building, entrepreneurship, education and access to health. The Islamic Republic of Iran joined consensus on the draft resolution, but dissociated itself from any controversial or non-consensual language or ambiguous terminology in the text, including the fourteenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 2 (s).

48. **Mr. Jiménez** (Nicaragua) said that his Government recognized and promoted the empowerment of women as an essential and priority policy. However, references in the draft resolution to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and services could not be interpreted as support for abortion, or promotion thereof as a family planning method. Abortion and termination of pregnancy could under no circumstances be considered a fertility regulation or birth control method. As established in the International Conference on Population and Development, every country had the sovereign right to decide on its domestic legislation on that matter. In accordance with its Constitution and laws, Nicaragua established that all persons had the right to life, which was a fundamental right from the moment of conception.

49. **Ms. Sánchez García** (Colombia) said that her delegation had joined consensus on the draft resolution, which addressed a topic of high priority for her Government. While progress had been made, notably in

the area of care, a future version of the draft resolution should contain references to the impact of armed conflict on rural women, as well as to the women and peace and security agenda, in a comprehensive manner. The role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding must also be recognized, supporting and investing in women peacebuilders, as well as their networks, organizations and efforts at the local level. In future, language should be strengthened on access to health-care services; psychosocial assistance; legal assistance; services for victims of sexual violence in rural areas; the rights of Indigenous women; and the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination they faced. Gender mainstreaming should also be considered when tackling the world drug problem, in particular to recognize the role of rural women in illicit crop substitution programmes.

50. **Mr. Mahamadou Seydou** (Niger) said that Niger had established strategies for the economic integration, education and training of women, with a view to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. Such strategies were equally aimed at rural women and girls, and were designed to improve women's health, combat violence against women and increase their participation in decision-making and conflict prevention and resolution. Niger interpreted the terminology related to sexual and reproductive health, particularly the expression "reproductive rights", in accordance with its national legislation and without prejudice to its international human rights obligations, including on the right to life and the rights of parents. His delegation considered that the abovementioned terms did not imply the promotion of abortion as a human right or a family planning method, and did not oblige States to review their legislation in that regard. Niger implemented the draft resolution in accordance with the religious, ethical and cultural values of its society. Moreover, its statement applied to all resolutions relating to sexual and reproductive health and to reproductive rights.

51. **Ms. Rizk** (Egypt) said that her Government paid particular attention to the situation of women and girls in rural areas through its national policies and programmes. However, the draft resolution still contained references that were vague in terms of interpretation, particularly "multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination" coupled with the notion of violence. However, no definition of multiple and intersecting violence existed, and such an expression was factually incorrect. While her delegation was against all forms of discrimination against and abuse of women and girls, in particular women and girls in rural areas, the highlighted terminology in the text had not

arisen from a legal context, and therefore could not be recognized by Egypt.

52. **Ms. El Guera** (Mauritania) said that sexual and reproductive health could only be interpreted as indicating the health programmes approved by the authorities of Member States, in line with the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Meanwhile, the outcome documents of the review conferences could only be interpreted in line with the position of the United Nations, and conferences held by United Nations agencies and their secretariats could not amend agreements reached by the General Assembly, and in the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Use of the expression "multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination" was regrettable, as it was liable to be misinterpreted. Her delegation dissociated itself from any elements of the text whose interpretation might diverge from internationally agreed elements or were at risk of being misinterpreted, or that might contradict its national laws and policies. Mauritania understood the use of the word "gender" in the draft resolution and in any other resolutions to refer strictly to biological males and females, in line with its national laws and legislation and Islamic values.

53. **Mr. Altarsha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statements made by the representatives of Mauritania and Egypt.

54. *Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.22/Rev.1 was adopted.*

55. **Ms. Santa Ana Vara** (Mexico) said that a significant proportion of rural workers in Mexico were women, who undertook an essential role in activities related to agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing and forest conservation. Her delegation welcomed new elements introduced into the draft resolution in relation to the differentiated impact of climate change on women and girls, digital divides, and the promotion of decent work and other means of economic empowerment to eradicate poverty among rural women. Mexico had joined consensus on the draft resolution. However, strengthened references in the text to the sexual and reproductive health of women in rural areas would have been welcome, as the guarantee of such services was crucial. Progressive language should continue to be cultivated in the Third Committee and in other multilateral spaces, based on the standards established in the relevant international conferences, while also reflecting the progressiveness of human rights.

56. **Ms. Alonso Giganto** (Spain) said that, against the backdrop of global objectives to achieve gender equality and ensure full and equal enjoyment of human rights for women and girls, the draft resolution introduced key elements, such as references to General Assembly resolution 76/300; full participation of women in the context of climate change; the need to increase digital connectivity; and recognition of the negative impact of armed conflicts and food insecurity on rural women and girls.

57. Nonetheless, the European Union would have welcomed further progress. The pushback against inclusion of United Nations-agreed language in reference to sexual and reproductive health was regrettable, as it represented a critical component of well-being for all women and girls in rural areas. Her delegation looked forward to further improving and updating the draft resolution in future. The European Union would continue to act as a global leader in respecting, protecting and fulfilling all human rights and promoting gender equality and the rule of law, and would stand up against any attempt to backtrack on the rights of women and girls, on the principle that all human rights were universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.

58. **Mr. Al-Khaqani** (Iraq) said that his delegation dissociated itself from certain expressions and concepts in the draft resolution, including in relation to the outcomes of the review conferences of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which had not been held under the auspices of the General Assembly. In accordance with the national legislation of Iraq, gender and any terminology related thereto represented only biological males and females, and his country dissociated itself from any other interpretation. It also dissociated itself from any interpretation of the term “intersectionality” outside the context of biological males and females, and interpreted paragraph 2 (m) in accordance with its national legislation.

59. *Ms. Bananken Elel (Cameroon), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

60. **Ms. Al-mashehari** (Yemen) said that ensuring gender equality and the full participation of women in decision-making related to climate change and disaster risk reduction was key in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. While her delegation had joined consensus on the draft resolution, it was concerned over certain elements that were not based on international consensus or in line with Islamic doctrine, and were not recognized in its national legislation. In that regard, Yemen dissociated itself from the expression “multiple and intersecting forms of

discrimination” in the draft resolution and other resolutions of the Committee. In addition, it understood the concept of sexual and reproductive health and rights in accordance with its national health-related programmes and as agreed in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the review conferences, in line with the principles of the General Assembly. Lastly, her delegation understood the expression “gender” to indicate biological men and women.

61. **Ms. Fruean** (New Zealand) said that her delegation was pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution and, as a Pacific island country, it welcomed the inclusive language on remote areas and islands in the final text, recognizing the diverse needs and interests of women and girls living in such areas. An understanding of their needs and interests was crucial to meaningfully address the barriers to empowerment and the significant disparities in access to quality sexual and reproductive health services. While New Zealand welcomed the retention of language on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in the text, it would have preferred such language to be further strengthened. Furthermore, human rights violations, including sexual violence and gender-based violence, remained higher for those experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Reference to that issue in the draft resolution was therefore welcome, as was language on gender-responsive budgeting as a means of advancing gender equality and on promotion of the rights of Indigenous women and girls in rural areas, and their critical role in achieving sustainable development.

62. **Ms. Kim** (Australia) said that, while Australia was pleased to see the draft resolution adopted by consensus, it deeply regretted being unable to co-sponsor it. Her country had first-hand experience of the challenges faced by women and girls in rural areas, who experienced poorer sexual and reproductive health outcomes than people living elsewhere in Australia, including higher rates of teenage pregnancy and maternal, neonatal and foetal deaths. Those outcomes were often due to a lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services and education on the related issues. The draft resolution existed to address such challenges, which were faced by many Member States, to ensure that women and girls were not disadvantaged because of where they lived.

63. Her delegation had strongly advocated the inclusion of content on sexual and reproductive health in the draft resolution, which had unfortunately been rejected by a number of Member States. However, sexual and reproductive health constituted agreed

language contained in countless resolutions adopted by the Third Committee and the General Assembly, as well as in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Although progress had been made globally on gender equality and the rights of women and girls, Australia was gravely concerned that rejection of agreed language, particularly on the lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls, signified a disturbing regression of their rights, reinvigorating structural and systemic barriers that had taken significant efforts to eliminate. Her delegation hoped to be able to co-sponsor the draft resolution again in the future, and that it would contain language promoting the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls in rural areas.

64. **Mr. Zumilla** (Malaysia) said that his country had joined consensus on the draft resolution, and strived to improve the advancement and development of women, including those living in rural areas. However, his delegation would interpret the terms “multiple and intersecting forms” based on its national laws, values and customs, which did not include any concepts that were inconsistent with the existing international human rights architecture.

65. **Mr. Imanuel** (Indonesia) said that the development of rural areas was a matter of high priority for his Government, as reflected in its laws and strategies, which were implemented at the national and local levels and designed to benefit all, notably women and girls. However, discussions of women and girls in rural areas were diluted by issues that caused division rather than unity among countries. In that regard, Indonesia was committed to supporting unified efforts that ensured the empowerment of women on the ground while avoiding issues that did not enjoy universal agreement. His country would implement the draft resolution for the empowerment of Indonesian women and girls in rural areas in accordance with its national realities and priorities, and dissociated itself from the reference to “multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination”.

66. **Mr. Al Rawahi** (Oman), speaking on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council, said that those countries had joined consensus on the draft resolution, being convinced of the importance of the topics it raised. At the same time, references to sexual and reproductive health in paragraph 2 (a) would be interpreted in line with national legislation and laws.

67. **Ms. Diouf** (Senegal) said that natural disasters, pandemics, famine and lack of amenities in rural areas were all impediments to women’s development and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

To overcome those challenges, Senegal encouraged adequate investments in combating poverty, as well as the reduction of inequalities. Her delegation did not support the use of the expression “multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination” in the draft resolution, dissociating itself from such terminology throughout the text, and understood the term “gender” and any associated terminology to refer exclusively to the social relations between men and women.

68. **Ms. Niamba Congo** (Burkina Faso) said that the Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved without the promotion of women. Therefore, Governments must redouble efforts to leave no one behind by implementing policies and programmes to improve the situation of women and girls in rural areas. Her delegation welcomed the consensus reached on the draft resolution. However, the use of non-consensual concepts was regrettable, including “multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination” and on women and girls in all their diversity. Burkina Faso dissociated itself from all such terminology in the draft resolution and all future resolutions. In addition, the notion of gender referred to social relations between men and women and to the structural distinctions that characterized them in terms of their social and cultural role, status and duties. Meanwhile, sexual and reproductive health would be interpreted in accordance with the national legal framework and cultural values of her country, without prejudice to its international obligations.

69. **Ms. Korac** (United States of America) said that the United States was a strong proponent of advancing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Her delegation appreciated additional references in the draft resolution to the impacts of gender stereotypes, the unequal share of unpaid care work, precarious working conditions, malnutrition and food insecurity on rural women and girls. Such factors compounded the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and the sexual and gender-based violence experienced by women and girls in rural areas.

70. Despite the positive elements of the draft resolution, the negotiation process had resulted in a loss of critical language, including references to access to sexual and reproductive health for women and girls in rural areas, and the preferred formulation of her country on sexual and reproductive health and rights. That loss of language was particularly regrettable for a biannual text negotiated against the backdrop of the shadow pandemic, which disproportionately impacted women and girls in rural areas, especially those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as women and girls with disabilities. Similarly, the inclusion of a reference to the newly adopted Committee on World

Food Security Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition could have drawn global attention to that important matter. The lack of references to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the women and peace and security agenda, which had received broad support at the negotiating table, was also deeply regrettable.

71. *Mr. Marschik (Austria) resumed the Chair.*

72. **Ms. Samai** (Algeria) said that her delegation had joined consensus on the draft resolution as women should be given priority attention, particularly women and girls in rural areas, who were key to development. The concepts of sexual and reproductive health and gender set out in the draft resolution could only be interpreted within the framework of the national legislation of Algeria. Moreover, her country dissociated itself from the concept of multiple and intersecting forms of violence, which was neither based on international consensus nor set out in its national legislation.

73. **Mr. Jaiteh** (Gambia) said that the Gambia was committed to improving the situation of women and girls in both rural and urban areas, in accordance with its national laws and values, and therefore joined consensus on the draft resolution. Definition of the term "gender" was understood in line with the values, customs, laws and policies of the Gambia, and referred to men and women. Any other definitions provided in terms such as "multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination" were not in conformity with the values of his country, and were therefore dissociated from in letter and spirit throughout the draft resolution.

74. **Mr. Hamed** (Libya) said that his delegation had joined consensus on the draft resolution, as it contained significant elements on improving the situation of women and girls in rural areas, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the terms "multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination", "access to sexual and reproductive health" and "gender" would be interpreted in accordance with national legislation and the precepts of Islam.

Agenda item 70: Right of peoples to self-determination (*continued*) (A/C.3/78/L.24)

Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.24: The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination

75. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

76. **Ms. Rizk** (Egypt), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

(OIC), said that the fact that it was still necessary to submit such a text demonstrated that the international community had consistently failed in ensuring the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people.

77. The draft resolution gained particular significance against the ongoing, relentless and persistent genocidal aggression by Israel, the occupying Power, on the Gaza Strip, killing more than 10,000 civilians. The current aggression against Palestinian civilians in Gaza was the worst in a series of recurrent attacks and was in addition to other violations of the human rights of Palestinians, in contravention of the obligations of Israel, as an occupying Power, under international law, including violence against civilians in the West Bank, the continued forcible confiscation of land and houses and the establishment of illegal settlements. The genocidal aggression by Israel amounted to a crime against humanity. The bombing of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, places of worship and houses, was a war crime. Targeting humanitarian convoys, killing humanitarian actors, journalist and media professionals and the forced displacement of civilians was against international law. The call for the forced deportation of Palestinians to other countries was against international humanitarian law and accentuated the violation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and their right of return. It was only through upholding international justice that peace could prevail.

78. OIC was committed to the realization of the right to self-determination by the Palestinian people through the establishment of their independent contiguous State within the 4 June 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

79. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Haiti, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

80. He then noted that the following delegations also wished to become sponsors: Bahamas, Costa Rica, Syrian Arab Republic, Timor-Leste, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

81. **Ms. Salem** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that Gaza, her city, school and university had been destroyed and her family had been displaced. Under the rubble were the Palestinian people's photo albums, birthday songs, prayers, hard work and shattered souls and bodies. There had now been 4,000 children killed, while 1,500 remained under the rubble, and thousands more had been injured, orphaned and displaced. The last frontier had been reached, and the war had not ended. The Nakbah was ongoing in Gaza and the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. In just 30 days, Israel had erased the lives of Palestinian people and left them scrambling to collect memories that confirmed their existence, who they were and who they had wanted to be. The draft resolution would confirm their existence in their homeland, their right to remain there and their right to live independently and freely in a State of their own.

82. The draft resolution did not cancel out any nation and did not reduce any people's human rights. It demanded the end of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and reaffirmed the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. The wound of the Palestinian people had remained open since the establishment of the United Nations. They were not seeking special treatment but would not accept a lesser standing. Her delegation called on Member States to take a position that was legally moral and consistent by voting in favour of the draft resolution.

83. **Ms. Dhanutirto** (Indonesia), making a general statement before the voting, said that the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination was both a moral and legal imperative, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions. The Palestinian people, like that of any other nation, had the inherent right to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

84. Nevertheless, in Gaza and the West Bank, the illegal occupation and settlements of Israel continued to encroach on the rightful territories of the Palestinian people, in contravention of numerous United Nations resolutions and international law. There was no justification for the aggressive actions of Israel, which could rightfully be called an invasion.

85. In the application of international human rights law, the international community must avoid double standards, which undermined not only the cause of the

Palestinian people but the principles that underpinned the international system. The removal of illegal settlers and the cessation of the illegal occupation of Israel were not just Palestinian demands, they were requirements under international law and necessary steps towards peace and security for all regions. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination must be affirmed through actions and policies ensuring that all nations were held to the same standards with regard to human rights and international law. Her delegation invited all Member States to stand for humanity and vote in favour of the draft resolution.

86. **Ms. Mimran Rosenberg** (Israel), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that the only objective of the Hamas terror organization was the annihilation of the State of Israel. The attacks on 7 October 2023 had been an act not of resistance or of self-determination but of savagery by a genocidal terrorist organization that did not recognize Israel and openly called for the destruction of its people. For over 2,000 years, the Jewish people had wandered the world, yearning for a place to be safe and free of persecution, and, in 1948, that dream had become a reality, and they had returned to their ancestral homeland and become a strong and independent State. However, since the formation of Israel, its people had faced existential threats and ongoing attacks aiming to undermine the legitimacy of their self-determination.

87. Following the attacks by the Hamas terror organization on 7 October 2023, antisemitism and the delegitimization of Israel had reached unprecedented levels, and waves from the orchestrated political lynching were being felt in all corners of the world. A terror organization, which had brutally ripped people from their homes and loved ones, was dictating the world order. That terror organization had nothing to do with Palestinian rights or freedom.

88. The draft resolution was not about self-determination but was instead another tool used to undermine the existence of Israel. Violent protests, in which chants of "from the river to the sea" were called out, had nothing to do with the promotion of peace or freedom and were solely calls for the Jewish State to be destroyed and replaced by a Palestinian one. Her delegation had called for a vote on the draft resolution, would vote against it and called on all other Member States to vote against it. Israel also called for the release of all hostages held in Gaza.

89. **Ms. Arab Bafrani** (Islamic Republic of Iran), making a general statement before the voting, said that the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination had long been denied. The world was

witnessing an intensification of the Israeli regime's violence and blatant use of force, which had led to the deaths of thousands of Palestinians each day and continued unabated with no accountability. The Islamic Republic of Iran vehemently condemned the atrocities committed by the Israeli regime against the Palestinians in full view of the international community. Her delegation urged the international community to stand up for the right of displaced Palestinians to return to their homes, to take serious action to end the occupation and to secure the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to an independent State of Palestine.

90. The actions and decisions by the resistance of Palestine, which were solely determined by Palestinians themselves, were grounded in their right to self-determination, and were a completely legitimate response to seven decades of oppressive occupation and numerous atrocities by the Israeli regime. The Palestinian people had the freedom to make the choice that they believed to best serve their true interests and to exercise their own judgment in determining their course of action. Iran supported the Palestinian people in their struggle against occupation and in exercising their inalienable right to self-determination through the establishment of a sovereign State of Palestine with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. Her delegation strongly supported the draft resolution and encouraged other delegations to show their opposition to the crimes against humanity and atrocities committed by the Israeli apartheid regime in the Palestinian territories.

91. **Mr. Passmoor** (South Africa), making a general statement before the voting, said that, despite many relevant decisions having been taken, the people of Palestine continued to be denied their right to coexist as a State. Self-determination must be respected, protected and fulfilled.

92. His delegation condemned the heinous killings of civilians, both through the actions of Hamas and the excessive retaliation by Israel. While expressing horror at such violence, Member States must acknowledge that the context of those actions was the illegal occupation of Palestine by Israel for several decades, which had led to bitter hatred and increased violence.

93. The right of Israel to defend itself through military means had been erroneously used to justify its disproportionate use of force and actions against the people of Palestine. As confirmed by the International Court of Justice and the United Nations, Israel was an occupying Power and, as such, could use only tools applicable to the rule of law, including policing powers, to deal with criminal actions. An occupying State could not exercise control over the territory it occupied and

simultaneously lead military attacks on that territory under claims that it was foreign and posed an exogenous threat to national security. For international law to be credible, it should be uniformly and non-selectively applied, but the use of some mechanisms to serve narrow interests had resulted in the effectiveness of the system being called into question.

94. His delegation reaffirmed the right of the State of Palestine to self-determination. The State of Palestine should exist, as part of a two-State solution, along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital and in line with United Nations resolutions. Settlements and illegal occupation had been used to prevent the creation of a Palestinian State, and his delegation called on the international community to reject the Bantustan-type Balkanization that had increased bitterness and hatred and to amplify support for the Palestinian cause. To that end, Israeli settlements that were recognized as a clear violation of the territorial integrity and right to self-determination of the State of Palestine should leave the Palestinian territory. All efforts towards the two-State solution and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to an independent State of Palestine, must be increased.

95. *At the request of the representative of Israel, a recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.24.*

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia,

Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Togo, Tonga, Vanuatu.

96. Draft resolution [A/C.3/78/L.24](#) was adopted by 168 votes to 5, with 9 abstentions.

97. **Mr. González Behmaras** (Cuba) said that, with the complicity of the United States, Israel was committing full-fledged genocide against the Palestinian people, carrying out indiscriminate bombings and military operations in Gaza, destroying housing, hospitals and civilian infrastructure, depriving the people of water, food, electricity and fuel and forcibly displacing thousands of people. Nothing could justify such actions, which constituted collective punishment, serious violations of international humanitarian law, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

98. History had not begun on 7 October 2023. For decades and at the hands of Israel, the Palestinian people had suffered from the illegal occupation of its territory, the colonization of its land, human rights violations and apartheid. His delegation condemned the deaths of civilians and innocent persons from all parties to the conflict, regardless of ethnicity, origin, nationality or religion, and the recent killings of more than 10,000 civilians, including 4,300 children and some 100 workers of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), due to the actions of Israel.

99. His delegation supported a broad, just and sustainable two-State solution to the conflict that allowed for the exercise of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the creation of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine within the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and that guaranteed the right to return of refugees.

100. **Mr. Rizal** (Malaysia) said that the fundamental right to self-determination, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and other international instruments, including the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, must not be conveniently forgotten. Malaysia had therefore voted in favour of the draft resolution.

101. The Palestinian people's long-standing quest for self-determination remained unrealized, as a consequence of the blatant refusal and disregard by apartheid Israel, the occupying Power, to respect the two-State solution that had been decided by the same body that had admitted it as a fully-fledged Member State. Israel was becoming increasingly emboldened in its belligerence, having killed more than 10,000 Palestinians and forcibly displacing the population of Gaza. The oppressor, occupier and perpetrator of apartheid should not be allowed to play victim.

102. Malaysia steadfastly supported the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and called for the swift removal of all hindrances to the exercise of that inherent right as a legal and moral obligation.

103. **Mr. Geisler** (Germany) said that his delegation understood that the package of resolutions of which the draft resolution was one element had not been opened under current circumstances, so as not to trigger difficult and controversial text negotiations, and therefore did not reflect or address developments following 7 October 2023. On that understanding, and in line with his country's long-standing position of support for a two-State solution, his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution.

104. Germany stood in solidarity with Israel and condemned in the strongest possible terms the heinous acts of terror committed by Hamas. His delegation called on Hamas to immediately release all hostages, many of whom were foreign citizens, without any preconditions. Israel had a right to defend itself in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law. His delegation strove for the alleviation of the situation of the civilian population in Palestine and for the respect of international humanitarian law. The Charter of the United Nations and

international humanitarian law should guide work towards a meaningful peace process that allowed Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in peace and security and in two independent States.

105. **Mr. Alvarez** (Argentina) said that his delegation recognized the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and its right to establish an independent and viable State. It had voted in favour of the draft resolution, which reflected his country's recognition of the State of Palestine as a free and independent State within the 1967 borders, and in accordance with whatever would be agreed by the parties during the negotiation process. That recognition was consistent with the desire of the Government of Argentina to favour negotiations for the end of the conflict and its deep belief in the peaceful coexistence of all peoples. He confirmed the unwavering support of Argentina for the right of Israel to be recognized by all and to live in peace and security within its borders.

106. Exercise of the right to self-determination presupposed that there was an active subject in the form of a people subject to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation, as defined in General Assembly resolution [1514 \(XV\)](#), paragraph 1. Without such a subject, there was no right to self-determination. Argentina welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution and hoped that it could contribute to the prompt realization of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, including their right to an independent Palestinian State.

107. **Mr. Eckersley** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had continued to vote in favour in the draft resolution, in line with its long-standing support of a two-State solution as the only viable long-term solution. The United Kingdom welcomed the provision of technical rollovers of the text by the Observer State of Palestine and recognized that the language in the draft resolution did not reflect the current context in Israel and Gaza. His delegation's vote in favour of the draft resolution did not undermine its enduring solidarity with Israel in the wake of the heinous terrorist attacks by Hamas on 7 October 2023.

108. His delegation continued to support the right of Israel to self-defence against terrorism and reaffirmed that Israel must act in line with international humanitarian law and take every feasible precaution to avoid harming civilians. The United Kingdom underlined that Hamas did not speak or act in the interest of the Palestinian people. Hamas had deliberately murdered and kidnapped innocent people in Israel and callously put civilians in Gaza at risk. His delegation reiterated its support for the Palestinian Authority as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It

strongly condemned settler violence against Palestinians and maintained its long-standing position that settlements were illegal under international law and contrary to the cause of peace.

109. To prevent the further spread of conflict, the United Kingdom would work towards a two-State solution, based on 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared capital, which provided justice and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

110. **Mr. Shrier** (United States of America) said that his delegation could not support the draft resolution. One-sided resolutions that ignored the facts on the ground did not help to advance peace or to achieve the highest aspirations of the Palestinian people and were purely rhetorical documents that sought to divide Member States when they should be coming together. The United States could not accept Hamas terrorizing Israel and using Palestinian civilians as human shields, nor could it allow violent extremist settlers to attack and terrorize Palestinians in the West Bank. The status quo was untenable and unacceptable. His delegation could not countenance a continuing situation in which many innocent civilians on both sides had had to pay with their lives.

111. After the crisis was over, there must be a vision of what would come next, centred on a two-State solution. That solution would require concerted efforts by Israelis, Palestinians, regional partners and global leaders to reach a path towards peace and to integrate Israel into the region while insisting that the aspirations of the Palestinian people should be part of a more hopeful future. The draft resolution was detrimental to that vision.

112. The United States would work with all Member States to chart a future in which Israelis and Palestinians had equal measures of security, freedom, justice, opportunity and dignity and in which Palestinians could realize their legitimate right to self-determination and a State of their own.

113. **Ms. Rizk** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), said that actions spoke louder than words and sponsoring the resolution and expressing commitment to the text were not enough alone. Actions on the ground had indicated that the international community had not yet been able to hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, through its continued illegal occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and its current aggression against Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

114. **Ms. Monica** (Bangladesh) said that the military operations being unleashed by the occupation forces against unarmed civilians in Gaza, killing over 11,000 civilians in just one month, were another demonstration of the disregard of Israel for international law and the authority of the United Nations. Her delegation condemned the attempt by Israel to use the right of self-defence as a pretext for its indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian objects, the killing of women, children, elderly persons, journalists and humanitarian workers, the denial of humanitarian access and forced displacement. The rights and duties of any occupying Power were well codified in international law, and it was regrettable that many delegations had been misguided by that argument, which undermined the long-standing principles and rules of international law regarding occupation.

115. The attack on 7 October 2023 had not happened in a vacuum, and the decades of occupation, indiscriminate killing, torture and forced displacement of innocent Palestinians at the hands of Israel, in total violation of international law, could not be overlooked or justified. The lack of progress in the realization of a two-State solution and the absence of peace had led to the current situation.

116. Her delegation called for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce, leading to the cessation of hostilities, and for investigations, including by the International Criminal Court, into violations of international humanitarian law and the rules of war in Gaza. It also called for an immediate end to the occupation and all actions contravening international law by the occupying Power in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The only way to establish peace in the region was through the realization of an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on pre-1967 borders, as part of the two-State solution.

117. **Mr. Altarsha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Palestinian people needed the guarantee of their right to life more than they needed Member States to maintain their position on the draft resolution. Many delegations had voted against the draft resolution because it did not reflect the highest aspiration of the Palestinian people yet, by supporting Israel, denied that aspiration to the Palestinian people. The number of children who had been killed in Gaza by Israel was already at 4,000 and was increasing.

118. The Palestinian people had already exercised their right to self-determination and had decided decades ago that they wanted a State of their own. The decision of the Palestinian people was apparently unacceptable for

Israel and its allies, which continued to vote against the draft resolution in order to push the Palestinians to change their mind and to have their own State somewhere else or not at all.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

119. **Ms. Mimran Rosenberg** (Israel) said that the suffering in Gaza was heartbreaking. Her country was in a war which it had not started, wanted or expected and which had been declared on Israel by Hamas on 7 October 2023, when, with horrifying cruelty, Hamas had invaded, tortured and mutilated children in front of their parents before executing them and had burned entire families alive. Hamas was exploiting the civilians of Gaza, preventing temporary civilian evacuation from combat zones, seizing humanitarian aid and firing rockets indiscriminately from within densely populated urban areas. It was strategically embedding armaments and terror cells within, next to and underneath hospitals, schools, United Nations facilities and other concentrations of non-combatants, which constituted a war crime.

120. Israel was doing everything it could to get civilians inside Gaza out of harm's way. For over a month, it had warned civilians to temporarily leave the northern part of Gaza for their safety and had facilitated humanitarian corridors so that the people of northern Gaza could leave until the fighting was over. The Israel Defense Forces had protected the people of Gaza by securing one such corridor when Hamas had shot at the people of northern Gaza, rather than enabling them to move to a safer place.

121. Hamas was a genocidal, Jihadist terrorist organization, which had openly vowed to repeat the atrocities of 7 October until they had killed every man, woman and child in Israel and annihilated the Jewish people. The Third Committee would look very different if, from the beginning, the finger had been pointed at Hamas, which was really responsible for the situation in Gaza, instead of at Israel.

122. Israel did not believe that the value of life could be negotiated and did not want to go into Gaza but had no other choice in order to protect itself and its own citizens. Her country, as an island between various countries, must ensure that its borders were protected from threats in any direction, since it had an obligation to ensure that the State of Israel continued to exist. There were two sides to the situation, but only one of them, a terror organization, was responsible and could bring an end to the situation immediately. She called for Member States to help Israel to protect itself and to stop the world order being dictated by a terror organization.

The issue was about not just the massacre of 7 October but about the people of Palestine, who, for years, had been deprived of their rights by Hamas.

123. **Mr. Altarsha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the representative of Israel had stated that the war in Gaza was not the war that her country had wanted, which implied that Israel did want a war of some kind. Israel had told the Palestinian people that they should leave their homes only temporarily, yet it had sent the same message in both 1948 and 1967. If the events of 7 October 2023 had never happened, the Committee would see fewer countries speaking out against Israel and fewer countries defending it, but Israel continued to committed crimes, as it had done since 1948.

124. The occupying Power of Israel continued to repeat that statements made against it constituted antisemitism, yet the Arab people were themselves Semitic. Israel should not keep repeating the same thing without learning history. Israel was trying to be the victim in order to buy time, push people away from Gaza, take over the area and never allow the people to return. If it did so, there would be no State of Palestine. That was the goal of Israel, which had a very different definition of self-determination to that agreed by all other Member States.

125. **Ms. Salem** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the draft resolution did not cancel out any nation or reduce the human rights of any people, but instead simply called for the enabling of the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination on their own land.

126. In 30 days, over 11,000 Palestinians had been killed, 70 per cent of whom were women and children. There was clearly something wrong with the military conduct of Israel in Gaza. Claiming that Israel was trying to protect civilians there was wrong and an insult to the intelligence of the delegations of the Third Committee. In the West Bank, Israel had killed or forcibly displaced hundreds of Palestinians, and 2023 had been the deadliest year since the United Nations had started recording the crimes against the Palestinian people in 2005.

127. All Member States should strive for the alternative reality in which there was no occupation, conflict or killings of either Palestinians or Israelis and in which there was shared peace and security. Lives needed to be saved now, because tomorrow could be too late.

Agenda item 71: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/C.3/78/L.27, A/C.3/78/31/Rev.1, A/C.3/78/47, A/C.3/78/50, A/C.3/78/51, A/C.3/78/57, A/C.3/78/63, A/C.3/78/66 A/C.3/78/67, A/C.3/78/68 and A/C.3/78/69)

Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.27: National human rights institutions

128. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

129. **Mr. Drescher** (Germany), introducing the draft resolution, said that the draft resolution set the framework for cooperation between the United Nations system and national human rights institutions, including the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

130. Two substantial changes had been made to the draft resolution submitted at the seventy-sixth session (General Assembly resolution 76/170). Firstly, focus had been placed on the contributions made by national human rights institutions to the increasingly pressing issue of climate change. Such focus would encourage more national human rights institutions to engage in climate action. Secondly, it was noted in the draft resolution that national human rights institutions had a positive impact on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and could help Member States to fast-track vital protection and other services to those who were left behind. Moreover, according to the *Global Progress Report on Sustainable Development Goal 16 indicators*, the annual growth rate of the number of national human rights institutions worldwide needed to increase from 2.4 per cent in 2023 to 10 per cent in 2030. The draft resolution also included a reference to the thirtieth anniversary of the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

131. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Andorra, Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Hungary, Israel, Lebanon, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Palau, Paraguay, Peru, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Serbia, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia and Uruguay.

132. He then noted that Jordan, Mali and Nigeria also wished to become sponsors.

133. *Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.27 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.31/Rev.1: Protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons

134. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution and the amendment contained in [A/C.3/78/L.63](#) had no programme budget implications.

135. **Ms. Rambøll** (Norway), introducing the draft resolution, said that, by the end of 2022, an estimated 71.1 million people had been internally displaced, and the situation of many of them had become protracted. That concerning trend must be reversed through collective efforts. The draft resolution included recognition of the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement as a robust plan to strengthen international efforts to protect and support internally displaced persons and to advance solutions. In the draft resolution, Member States expressed concern at the high level of global food insecurity, rising risks of famine, loss of livelihoods, the impacts of and risks for displacement and the ongoing consequences and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic for internally displaced persons. They also recognized recently adopted political declarations on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and on universal health coverage and recalled the declaration of the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. The draft resolution included language adopted by consensus in previous years to recall relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

136. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Belize, Czechia, El Salvador, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Italy, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malta, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Morocco, Myanmar, New Zealand, Paraguay, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Thailand and United States of America.

137. He then noted that the following delegations also wished to become sponsors: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Malawi, Maldives and Uganda.

A/C.3/78/L.63: proposed amendment to draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.31/Rev.1

138. **Mr. Kashaev** (Russian Federation), introducing the amendment contained in [A/C.3/78/L.63](#), said that his delegation had legitimate concerns about reference to

the Rome Statute of the so-called International Criminal Court contained in the twenty-eighth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. The moral and legal guidelines for the development of the Rome Statute had been the Nuremberg Tribunal, and the International Criminal Court had been expected to impartially and effectively investigate the most serious crimes under international law.

139. However, the Rome Statute had been undermined, since the International Criminal Court, a pseudo-judicial body, had fallen far short of the ideals that had existed at its inception and had instead become an instrument of political pressure. It was not transparent, had inequitable geographical representation, was characterized by politicization and served the interests of Western countries. His delegation would not remain captive to the idealistic illusions that had been overturned by the 20-year failure of the International Criminal Court. It had therefore proposed the deletion of the reference to the Rome Statute from the twenty-eighth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution.

140. **Mr. Belmont Roldán** (Spain), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union and its member States regretted that the Russian Federation had presented an amendment to a humanitarian draft resolution, which had traditionally been adopted by consensus. Norway had conducted transparent and fair negotiations on the text, and delegations had widely agreed to use previously agreed language in the twenty-eighth preambular paragraph, as was established practice in humanitarian resolutions.

141. Internal displacement was a global phenomenon that required durable solutions. The text was an important vehicle through which the international community reaffirmed its support to internally displaced persons. The text was humanitarian in its nature and purpose and should remain as such. The member States of the European Union would vote against the amendment and called on other Member States to do the same.

142. **Ms. Desigis** (Switzerland), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that her delegation regretted that the amendment presented by the representative of the Russian Federation proposed the deletion of a substantive part of the twenty-eighth preambular paragraph consisting of the provisions of the Rome Statute regarding the deportation or forcible transfer of populations. Switzerland supported the International Criminal Court, which was an essential component of the international legal framework, in the fight against impunity and encouraged all States to vote

against the amendment. Switzerland expressed its hope that all States would join the consensus on the text since it was more important than ever to send a strong signal of unity to all concerned actors.

143. *A recorded vote was taken on the Russian amendment in document [A/C.3/78/L.63](#).*

In favour:

Belarus, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Iraq, Mali, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic.

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Zambia.

Abstaining:

Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen.

144. *The Russian amendment in document [A/C.3/78/L.63](#) was rejected by 91 votes to 13, with 45 abstentions.*

145. **Mr. Altarsha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, as it was not party to the International Criminal Court, the Syrian Arab Republic had not ratified the Rome Statute and therefore had no reason to recall its provisions. Furthermore, the activities of the International Criminal Court had raised questions regarding its objectivity and credibility. For example, the United States had issued the American Servicemembers' Protection Act of 2002, under which American soldiers would be protected from prosecution at the International Criminal Court, and the Court had targeted only certain Member States and Heads of Government, all of whom had taken issue with Western policy. His delegation had therefore voted in favour of the amendment to strike out reference to the International Criminal Court from the draft resolution.

146. **Mr. Kashaev** (Russian Federation), speaking in explanation of position before the decision, said that his delegation expressed its gratitude to Norway for the constructive negotiations on the text of the draft resolution and had joined the consensus. However, his delegation wished to disassociate itself from the twenty-eighth preambular paragraph.

147. *Draft resolution [A/C.3/78/L.31/Rev.1](#) was adopted.*

148. **Mr. González Behmaras** (Cuba) said that his delegation shared the noble objectives of the draft resolution, had engaged constructively in negotiations and had joined the consensus. However, his delegation did not agree with references, contained in the twenty-eighth preambular paragraph, to the Rome Statute, of which Cuba was not a State party, and to the International Criminal Court, whose jurisdiction it did not recognize. His delegation had therefore supported the amendment contained in document [A/C.3/78/L.63](#), which had aimed to address legitimate concerns that went beyond the purpose of the draft resolution. Since the amendment had not been adopted, his delegation wished to disassociate itself from the twenty-eighth preambular paragraph, did not consider it to be agreed language and did not feel bound by it or by its possible scope.

149. **Mr. Sahraoui** (Algeria) said that his delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution, since Algeria supported its main objective of assisting and protecting internally displaced persons. Since Algeria was not a State party to the Rome Statute, his delegation had abstained from voting on the amendment contained in [A/C.3/78/L.63](#), in line with its principled position on references to the International Criminal Court.

150. Article 49 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) stipulated that individual

or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, were prohibited, regardless of their motive. Therefore, in line with the spirit of the twenty-eighth preambular paragraph, which defined the deportation or forcible transfer of populations as a crime against humanity and the unlawful deportation, transfer or ordering of the displacement of the civilian population as war crimes, Algeria condemned the order issued by the occupying Power to evacuate all areas in the Gaza Strip north of the Wadi Gaza and its attempts to transfer the Palestinian population outside their homeland. That order should be rescinded, in accordance with the General Assembly resolution contained in [A/ES-10/L.25](#). Algeria called on the international community to ensure respect of international humanitarian law as *jus cogens* rules by which all parties to conflict should abide and recalled that Security Council resolution [681 \(1990\)](#) called upon the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for its obligations under that Convention.

151. **Mr. Jiménez** (Nicaragua) said that, since Nicaragua was not a State party to the Rome Statute, his delegation had supported and voted in favour of the amendment proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation. As the amendment had not been adopted, his delegation wished to disassociate from references to the International Criminal Court contained in the draft resolution. Nicaragua believed in international criminal justice that was impartial, non-selective and complemented national justice systems without politicization or double standards.

152. **Mr. Sibomana** (Burundi) said that his country had previously been a party to the International Criminal Court before leaving in 2017. Burundi had therefore voted in favour of the amendment proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation. The International Criminal Court seemed to be an instrument of oppression towards certain countries. Burundi believed in fairness and equity with regard to justice.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.