



General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
12 January 2024

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 21st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 9 November 2023, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Amorín (Uruguay)

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

Agenda item 15: Information and communications technologies for sustainable development

(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.11)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.11: Information and communications technologies for sustainable development

1. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution was based on the resolution of the previous year and built on key issues of importance, including the progress of information and communications technologies in responding to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and other crises. The text also called for universal and affordable access, improved capacity-building and increased investment in digital infrastructure, as well as strengthened governance and international cooperation in the foregoing areas.

Agenda item 16: Macroeconomic policy questions

(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.5, A/C.2/78/L.6, A/C.2/78/L.7, A/C.2/78/L.8, A/C.2/78/L.9, A/C.2/78/L.15, A/C.2/78/L.16 and A/C.2/78/L.17)

(a) International trade and development

(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.5 and A/C.2/78/L.6)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.5: International trade and development

2. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the multilateral trading system had been put under considerable strain, owing to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, the multiplication of sanctions and a rise in protectionism. The draft resolution highlighted the challenges faced by the multilateral trading system and emphasized that the work of the trading system should focus primarily on development, while making provisions for special and differential treatment, in order to ensure that the benefits of trade were more widely shared. The text also emphasized the role of the trading system in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, enhancing market access for developing countries and reform of the World Trade Organization.

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.6: Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries

3. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said

that the draft resolution served to reaffirm that the imposition of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries, constituted a major obstacle to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Such actions not only undermined the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, they also severely threatened the freedom of trade and investment and disproportionately impacted the most vulnerable segments of society.

(b) International financial system and development *(continued)* (A/C.2/78/L.7)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.7: International financial system and development

4. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution focused on the progress and shortcomings of the international financial system in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and other global crises. It called for further action within the system in the areas of debt treatment, the allocation and channelling of special drawing rights and the operations of multilateral development banks, while also calling for reforms of the international financial architecture and strengthening the participation of developing countries in global economic decision-making and governance.

(c) External debt sustainability and development *(continued)* (A/C.2/78/L.8)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.8: External debt sustainability and development

5. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that a large number of developing countries were unable to manage their debt burdens, with 52 per cent of low-income countries and 25 per cent of emerging economies considered to be in debt distress or at high risk of debt distress. There was an urgent need to reconsider the principles on which the international debt architecture was built. The recent handling of the issue by the international community was unsatisfactory, and action-oriented solutions were needed to ease the debt burdens of developing countries and address systemic fragilities and imbalances.

(d) Commodities *(continued)* (A/C.2/78/L.9)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.9: Commodities

6. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution highlighted the challenges faced

by commodity-dependent developing countries in their pursuit of economic diversification and resilience in the face of excessive commodity price volatility. Since 2015, the text had been aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The draft resolution aimed to preserve key achievements of previous versions of the text while providing an update on current trends of commodity price volatility, resulting from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, slow economic recovery and geopolitical tensions. The text also introduced the topic of critical minerals and the need to add value to their supply chains, while language had been strengthened on the issue of food insecurity and the need for more resilient, diversified agrifood systems.

(e) Financial inclusion for sustainable development (*continued*) (A/C.2/78/L.15)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.15: Financial inclusion for sustainable development

7. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution underscored the importance of digital financial technologies, formal financial services and financial inclusion. It recognized that national financial inclusion strategies played an important role in overcoming financing gaps and increasing access to finance. The text also highlighted the need for the international community to develop financial literacy and education, with a view to promoting financial inclusion and achieving sustainable development.

(f) Promotion of international cooperation to combat illicit financial flows and strengthen good practices on assets return to foster sustainable development (*continued*) (A/C.2/78/L.16)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.16: Promotion of international cooperation to combat illicit financial flows and strengthen good practices on assets return to foster sustainable development

8. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution addressed the needs of countries that had suffered as a result of the illicit transfer of funds and the slow pace of recovery and return of such stolen assets to their countries of origin. Given its complexity, ongoing discussions were required on the concept of illicit financial flows, with a view to fostering a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and ultimately designing adequate policy responses. The updated text featured four fundamental truths: combating illicit financial flows was a development challenge; illicit

financial flows reduced the availability of valuable development financing resources; developing countries were particularly susceptible to the negative impacts of illicit financial flows; and enhanced international cooperation was a sine qua non to addressing illicit financial flows.

(g) Promoting investments for sustainable development (*continued*) (A/C.2/78/L.17)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.17: Promoting investments for sustainable development

9. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text sought to galvanize concerted action towards increased private sector investment to ensure inclusive and sustainable development. It aimed to promote sustainable and innovative financing opportunities and mechanisms in order to unlock new capital for sustainable investment. The draft resolution also incorporated some of the recommendation contained in the *World Investment Report 2023*.

Agenda item 17: Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development (*continued*) (A/C.2/78/L.10)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.10: Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development

10. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that further progress was needed on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, given the emergence of the great financial divide, which would translate into a sustainable development divide if left unaddressed. The draft resolution highlighted the need to scale up long-term financing; address the rising risks of debt distress; undertake international financial architecture reform; enhance access to technology for developing countries; and achieve greater progress on sustainable development. It also called for the convening of a fourth international conference on financing for development.

Agenda item 18: Sustainable development
(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.22, A/C.2/78/L.23, A/C.2/78/L.33, A/C.2/78/L.35, A/C.2/78/L.36, A/C.2/78/L.37, A/C.2/78/L.41, A/C.2/78/L.42 and A/C.2/78/L.43)

- (a) Towards the achievement of sustainable development: implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through sustainable consumption and production, building on Agenda 21**
(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.22)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.22: Promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on Agenda 21

11. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution was based on the resolution of the previous year and built on key issues of importance, including the need to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and enhance support for developing countries.

- (b) Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** (continued)
(A/C.2/78/L.23)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.23: Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

12. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution built on the text of the previous year and included key issues of importance to small island developing States, including challenges in access to affordable financing, addressing debt and responding to the adverse impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and other environmental challenges. The text highlighted the importance of addressing loss and damage and the need for capacity-building, while also building momentum for the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

- (c) Disaster risk reduction** (continued)
(A/C.2/78/L.33)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.33: Disaster risk reduction

13. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution was based on the resolution of the previous year and incorporated important elements from recommendations made in several reports. Among other issues, the text focused on the need to address the economic, social and environmental impacts of disasters, enhance adaptive capacities, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, the El Niño phenomenon and extreme weather events.

- (d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind** (continued)
(A/C.2/78/L.35)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.35: Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind

14. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that current climate challenges required a comprehensive and urgent global response. Climate change manifested itself in the increasing frequency and magnitude of extreme weather events, as well as in situations of water scarcity, food insecurity, rising sea levels, desertification and the loss of biodiversity. Adaptation and mitigation efforts were critical for sustainable development needs and for addressing the damage caused by such impacts. The draft resolution stressed the urgency of addressing climate change in line with the efforts of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the outcomes of the Conference of the Parties thereto, as well as the needs of developing countries and the need for developed countries to provide means of implementation in the form of financing and concessional financing. The text highlighted the need for a balanced response to climate issues, including through measures in the areas of mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and financing.

15. The Group welcomed the historic decision made at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to establish a loss and damage fund, as reflected in the draft resolution. That decision was key for developing countries, and delegations should engage constructively on that matter.

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa
(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.36)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.36: Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

16. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution built on the text from the previous year. It reflected key issues including combating desertification, land degradation and drought, with a view to achieving land degradation neutrality, notably for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (continued)
(A/C.2/78/L.37)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.37: Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its contribution to sustainable development

17. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution had been substantially updated and streamlined, focusing on significant recent developments such as the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the strategy for resource mobilization, the establishment by the Global Environment Facility of the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund, the Gender Plan of Action and multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing, and a new programme of work on article 8 (j) and related provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity. There was a need to provide and mobilize new and additional means of implementation to developing countries to support the achievement of the objectives of the Convention.

(g) Education for sustainable development
(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.41)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.41: Education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

18. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution was based on General Assembly resolution 76/209 (2021) and built on several key issues, including the importance of education for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Efforts to strengthen

education must be intensified across all three pillars for sustainable development. The text reaffirmed the role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in that regard, and highlighted efforts to increase education and financing through relevant stakeholders, including the Sustainable Development Goal 4-Education 2030 High-level Steering Committee.

(h) Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.42)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.42: Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

19. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution was based on the resolution of the previous year and reflected important elements, such as ensuring just and inclusive energy transition, the role of natural gas and energy storage, the importance of ensuring energy security, and enhancing efforts towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7. Such efforts included strengthening support and mobilizing additional finance, providing technical assistance and facilitating knowledge-sharing and capacity-building for developing countries.

(i) Combating sand and dust storms (continued)
(A/C.2/78/L.43)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.43: Combating sand and dust storms

20. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution stressed the need for regional and international cooperation to manage and mitigate the effects of sand and dust storms, enhance early warning systems and share climate and weather information. Resilient action to combat sand and dust storms required a better understanding of their impacts on people, the environment and economic growth. The second International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms had been held in the Islamic Republic of Iran in September 2023, with a view to enhancing global and regional cooperation.

21. The text built on the resolution of the previous year, with the addition of elements focusing on a request for the General Assembly to hold a high-level meeting on sand and dust storms, and reiterated the request for the Secretary-General to consider designating a relevant agency or entity with adequate capacity to act as a focal point on sand and dust storms in the United Nations system.

Agenda item 19: Globalization and interdependence
(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.12, A/C.2/78/L.13 and
A/C.2/78/L.14)

**(a) Science, technology and innovation for
sustainable development** (continued)
(A/C.2/78/L.12)

*Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.12: Science, technology
and innovation for sustainable development*

22. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution recognized that science, technology and innovation were critical to sustainable development and implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as to industrial development in developing countries. The text also called for the provision of means for developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity and to promote access to digital skills. It also proposed the convening of a high-level event on science, technology and innovation for development during the eightieth session of the General Assembly, with a focus on developing countries.

(b) Culture and sustainable development
(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.13)

*Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.13: Culture and
sustainable development*

23. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that contemporary challenges, which had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, had exposed the vulnerability of the cultural sector and highlighted its important role in the recovery process. Increasing the resilience of the cultural sector was necessary, while also striving to protect and preserve cultural heritage. The role of culture in sustainable development was increasingly referenced in global and regional policy dialogue, and significant progress had been made on the measurement of the impact of culture on sustainable development.

**(c) Development cooperation with middle-income
countries** (continued) (A/C.2/78/L.14)

*Draft resolution: A/C.2/78/L.14: Development
cooperation with middle-income countries*

24. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text was based on the resolution adopted in 2021 and served to advance discussions on addressing the diverse development needs and priorities of middle-income countries. The draft resolution provided

concrete actions for developing new measures of progress that complemented or went beyond gross domestic product and for elaborating a comprehensive, system-wide response plan to address the multidimensional nature of sustainable development, notably for middle-income countries.

**Agenda item 20: Groups of countries in special
situations** (continued) (A/C.2/78/L.2 and
A/C.2/78/L.3)

**(a) Follow-up to the Fifth United Nations
Conference on the Least Developed Countries**
(A/C.2/78/L.2)

*Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.2: Follow-up to the Fifth
United Nations Conference on the Least
Developed Countries*

25. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution was primarily based on the resolution of the previous year with technical updates on key issues of importance, particularly for the least developed countries. The draft resolution focused in particular on the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. Among other issues, the text referred to the disproportionate effects of ongoing global multiple crises and the rising risk of debt distress in developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, and called for ambitious actions to address those challenges.

**(b) Follow-up to the second United Nations
Conference on Landlocked Developing
Countries** (A/C.2/78/L.3)

*Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.3: Follow-up to the second
United Nations Conference on Landlocked
Developing Countries*

26. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution reflected elements of the assessment of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 by landlocked developing countries, transit countries, development partners and relevant international organizations. The text examined the challenges faced by landlocked developing countries, including the severe financial deficit, limited data and technical capacity constraints, as well as in their recovery from the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The draft resolution outlined the modalities for the timely convening of the third United Nations Conference on

Landlocked Developing Countries in 2024 and called for the identification of innovative solutions.

Agenda item 21: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*) (A/C.2/78/L.29 and A/C.2/78/L.30)

(a) Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027) (*continued*) (A/C.2/78/L.29)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.29: Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027)

27. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution was based on the resolution of the previous year and built on key issues, including the challenges faced in eradicating poverty in all its dimensions, in line with the 2030 Agenda. In particular, the provision of sufficient means of implementation to developing countries was necessary for poverty eradication, including extreme poverty, during the implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027).

(b) Eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/C.2/78/L.30)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.30: Eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

28. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that poverty remained an overwhelmingly rural phenomenon, primarily concentrated in the agricultural sector, and over 80 per cent of the extreme poor lived in rural areas. Given the multiple challenges faced by rural poor populations, the international community and the United Nations development system should continue to prioritize rural poverty eradication. More action was needed to eradicate rural poverty, including targeted measures to provide support, build capacity and enhance cooperation. The draft resolution was based on the resolution of the previous year and built on key issues, including access for the rural poor to food, energy, education, social protection, public infrastructure and services and Internet connectivity, thereby contributing towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Agenda item 22: Operational activities for development (*continued*)

(a) Operational activities for development of the United Nations system (*continued*) (A/C.2/78/L.38 and A/C.2/78/L.39)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.38: Operational activities for development of the United Nations system

29. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution was based on the resolution of the previous year and built on Economic and Social Council resolution 2023/31 and key elements for the 2024 quadrennial comprehensive policy review process. Among other issues, it included recognition of the financial challenges faced in the United Nations development system, including the shortfall of funding to the resident coordinator system, the current state of the 2030 Agenda, and the need for status updates on the implementation of the mandate set out in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. The text also contained references to the convening of dialogue on the funding compact and the funding of the resident coordinator system.

(b) South-South cooperation for development (*continued*) (A/C.2/78/L.39)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.39: South-South cooperation

30. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution built on the outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation to advance cooperation in economic, social and related domains by strengthening solidarity and cooperation among developing countries. The draft resolution offered an important opportunity to reflect on the vital role of international solidarity in supporting development cooperation across the global South, while bearing in mind the principles and unique characteristics of South-South cooperation.

Agenda item 23: Agriculture development, food security and nutrition (*continued*)

(a) Agriculture development, food security and nutrition (*continued*) (A/C.2/78/L.31)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.31: Agricultural development, food security and nutrition

31. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution was based on the resolution of the previous year, and built on key issues of importance.

It aimed to take stock of relevant developments such as the Sustainable Development Goals Summit and its commitment to accelerating actions to end hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition. Other updates included information on the progress made during the United Nations Decade of Family Farming, and relevant initiatives and global efforts to address the current food crisis and food price volatility, including the launch of the Early Warnings for All initiative.

32. **Mr. Armbruster** (United States of America) said that the United States remained committed to the Sustainable Development Goals through an inclusive approach, drawing on expertise from Government, civil society, the private sector and the development community. While his delegation stood by commonly agreed norms in consensus documents, it did not support references to conference statements such as the Kunming Declaration, nor the elevation of any individual Member State ideology, foreign policy platform or national slogans drawn from domestic policies within international documents. The 2030 Agenda was non-binding and created no new obligations under international law nor financial commitments. The Goals were interconnected and indivisible, and true sustainable development required progress on all 17.

33. Multilateral development banks had their own governance structures, mandates and decision-making processes to ensure they remained fiscally solvent and effective. While the United States was the largest donor of official development assistance, it had not committed to the United Nations target for countries to spend 0.7 per cent of their gross national income on such assistance. His country welcomed South-South cooperation and assistance, and was committed to helping countries in debt to return to sustainability, while noting the heightened debt vulnerabilities in low- and middle-income countries. The United States strongly supported the role of multilateral development banks in providing financial flows to borrowing countries in need. However, the growth of non-transparent debt was a matter of concern.

34. With regard to the Sustainable Development Goal stimulus, his delegation disagreed with several specific proposals; several of its recommended actions were also appropriately addressed outside of the United Nations.

35. On special drawing rights, pledges had reached the total global ambition of 100 billion dollars in voluntary contributions for those countries most in need. The United States had been highly responsive to international financial institution reform, and continued to press for further reforms to unlock additional financial capacity.

36. On trade and transfer, his country continued to support strong trade relationships globally and welcomed efforts to increase economic cooperation and advance prosperity for all.

37. With regard to illicit financial flows, the term lacked an internationally agreed definition. In that connection, economic sanctions constituted an appropriate tool for ensuring national security and achieving foreign policy objectives.

38. The COVID-19 pandemic, protracted conflicts, growing fragility, a resurgence of authoritarianism and climate shocks threatened lives, livelihoods and global stability. The brutal and unjustified war of aggression by Russia had aggravated those threats, contributing to surging food and energy prices, exacerbating poverty and eroding food security. His country was committed to working with fellow States to confront such transnational threats, in order to resume progress towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The United States also dedicated significant resources towards reducing loss of life and the socioeconomic impacts of disasters, and was tackling the climate crisis to avoid the most catastrophic impacts, including efforts to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions and to scale up climate finance.

39. It was regrettable that certain resolutions did not recommit to gender equality. In addition, the right to development was not recognized in any of the core United Nations human rights conventions, and was not recognized as a universal right held and enjoyed by individuals, unlike human rights. Therefore, his delegation remained concerned that the right to development protected States instead of individuals.

Agenda item 18: Sustainable development
(continued) (A/C.2/78/L.19/Rev.1 and A/C.2/78/L.21)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.19/Rev.1: International cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan

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

41. **Mr. Kerimkulov** (Kazakhstan), introducing the draft resolution, said that the draft resolution recognized that the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground remained a matter of serious concern. Kazakhstan was making considerable efforts to tackle the health, environmental and social problems of the former nuclear test site and its surrounding areas, however, much remained to be done. His country welcomed the relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/78/312) and his encouragement to

the international community to intensify contributions towards rehabilitating the Semipalatinsk region in order to alleviate the tragic consequences of nuclear testing so that no one was left behind. His delegation strongly encouraged Member States to support and sponsor the draft resolution.

42. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Lebanon, Lithuania, Maldives, Malta, Oman, Palau, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

43. She then noted that the following delegations also wished to become sponsors: Botswana, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Denmark, El Salvador, Jordan, Kuwait, Malawi, Nepal, Paraguay, Philippines, and United Arab Emirates.

44. *Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.19/Rev.1 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.21: Oil slick on Lebanese shores

45. **Mr. Téllez Alonso** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution addressed the unjustified environmental disaster caused by the destruction of a Lebanese power plant by Israel on 15 July 2006, which had provoked an oil slick covering two thirds of the Lebanese coastline, thereby undermining sustainable development and considerably damaging marine ecosystems, biodiversity and the environment.

46. The draft resolution had been updated to reflect its clear relevance to the 2030 Agenda. It recognized the many dimensions of the oil slick's impact on livelihoods, the Lebanese economy, natural resources, biodiversity, fisheries, tourism and human health. The text also called on Israel to assume responsibility for providing prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon, and reflected the grave concerns of the Secretary-General at the lack of acknowledgement by Israel of its responsibilities, including reparations and compensation to the Lebanese Government and people. It called on Member States and other stakeholders to intensify their support for Lebanon on the matter, with a view to preserving the ecosystem of that country and of the eastern Mediterranean basin.

47. The Group expressed solidarity with Lebanon and appreciated its efforts to contain the oil spill and its consequences. It stressed the need for Israel to assume responsibility for compensating the costs incurred by Lebanon and the considerable economic, social and environmental damage done.

48. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications. He then noted that the Russian Federation wished to become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

49. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.21.*

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, 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, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, 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, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, 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, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Guatemala, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, South Sudan, Tonga

50. *The draft resolution was adopted by 158 votes to 7, with 6 abstentions.*

51. **Mr. Hachem** (Lebanon) said that for the eighteenth consecutive year, the Committee had voted by an overwhelming majority in favour of the draft resolution. Every year, his country called for Israel to compensate Lebanon for the damage, valued at \$856.4 million in 2014. Unfortunately, Israel refused to comply with the draft resolution, thereby challenging international law. However, no one was above the law or had the right to use any pretext to politicize such matters and thus continue with impunity.

52. Environmental degradation was an obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 13 and 14. Lebanon would continue to mobilize its resources and use all legal means to support the draft resolution and ensure it received the payment due in reparations. As underscored by the Secretary-General, urgent action was required to combat climate change and address natural and other disasters that affected the planet, biodiversity and health.

53. Aggression by Israel was currently under way in the south of Lebanon through its use of white phosphorus and other internationally banned materials, which had led to yet more ecological disasters. Damage from such substances constituted an environmental crime, and potentially also a crime against humanity. A decision should be adopted to ensure that Israel ceased such actions and compensated Lebanon for the damage done.

54. **Mr. Ben Naftaly** (Israel) said that the draft resolution was deeply misleading, served no purpose and wasted the time and resources of the United Nations and its Member States. From its introduction 18 years before, it had been an exercise in deception. Like all previous resolutions on the subject, the current draft resolution failed to mention that the events in question were the direct consequence of a conflict instigated by Hezbollah. There had been no condemnation of the terrorism inflicted on Israel. Instead, the draft resolution condemned Israel, which had been the victims of terrorism. Unfortunately, history was currently repeating itself, as was the response of some Member States. Like the reports of the Secretary-General, the draft resolution had nothing new to say. Israel asked

Member States to closely consider the politically motivated voting that allowed the annual reappearance of the draft resolution.

55. **Mr. Armbruster** (United States of America) said that his delegation welcomed the historic and difficult decision made by Israel and Lebanon to agree on a maritime boundary, which would unlock benefits for both countries and was the type of agreement that should be encouraged by the Organization. However, instead of focusing on such progress, the same unfair resolutions were voted upon each year. The United States remained disappointed that the Committee had again taken up the unbalanced draft resolution, which was unfairly critical of Israel and demonstrated a clear and persistent institutional bias against one Member State. Such one-sided resolutions only distracted from efforts to advance peace and his delegation would continue to oppose all efforts to delegitimize Israel. Accordingly, the United States had once again voted against the draft resolution and expressed appreciation to the Member States that had done the same.

56. **Mr. Momeni** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that in line with its standard practice, the Israeli regime sought to divert international attention away from its unlawful policies and practices, instead of focusing on implementation of the resolution. It was regrettable that the representative of the Israeli regime had not remained within the scope of the agenda item, instead playing the victim card and making false, unfounded and baseless accusations against others, including the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Agenda item 59: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (*continued*) (A/C.2/78/L.44)

Draft resolution A/C.2/78/L.44: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

57. **Mr. Téllez Alonso** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the protracted Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory and the Syrian Golan had continued to have a detrimental effect on the living conditions of the Palestinian and Syrian populations, as well as on social and economic development in the occupied territories. The draft resolution reaffirmed the principle of permanent sovereignty of peoples under foreign occupation over their natural resources and the need for

Israel to fulfil the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It expressed grave concern over the extensive destruction by Israel, the occupying Power, of agricultural land and vital infrastructure in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip.

58. The text also called upon Israel to fully comply with its obligations under international law, and encouraged all States and international organizations to continue to actively pursue policies to ensure respect for those obligations. The Group hoped that the adoption of the draft resolution would help to alleviate the dire socioeconomic situation of the Palestinian and Syrian people living under Israeli occupation.

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

60. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Türkiye and the Russian Federation wished to become sponsors of the draft resolution.

61. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.44](#).*

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, 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, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, 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, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, 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, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore,

Slovakia, Slovenia, 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, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

Canada, Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America

Abstaining:

Australia, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Guatemala, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, South Sudan, Togo, Tonga, Tuvalu

62. *The draft resolution was adopted by 151 votes to 6, with 11 abstentions.*

63. **Mr. Kelsey** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation welcomed the technical rollovers of the text, and recognized that the language did not reflect the current context in Israel and Gaza. The vote in favour of the draft resolution by the United Kingdom did not undermine its enduring solidarity with Israel in the wake of the heinous terrorist attacks by Hamas on 7 October 2023. Alongside its ongoing support for the right of Israel to self-defence against terrorism, that country must act in line with international humanitarian law and take every feasible provision to avoid harming civilians. Hamas neither represented nor acted in the interests of the Palestinian people, and its murder and kidnapping of innocent people had put civilians in Gaza at risk. The United Kingdom reiterated its support for the Palestinian Authority as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

64. Palestinian civilians were experiencing a devastating humanitarian crisis in Gaza, with increasing violence in the West Bank. His delegation strongly condemned settler violence against Palestinians and maintained that settlements were illegal under international law and contrary to the cause of peace. The United Kingdom would continue to strive towards a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, working with partners to achieve a two-State solution, based on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared capital, with a view to providing justice and security to both Israelis and Palestinians. The current statement also applied to draft resolution [A/C.2/78/L.21](#).

65. **Mr. Lavalle Merchan** (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that, while the European Union would once again support the draft resolution, the use of the term "Palestine" therein

could not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine, and was without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on the issue and, hence, on the question of the validity of an accession to the conventions and treaties mentioned therein.

66. **Mr. Armbruster** (United States of America) said that Israelis and Palestinians equally deserved to live safe and secure lives and should enjoy equal measures of freedom, dignity, justice and prosperity. His Government was firmly committed to supporting advancement towards a two-State solution through constructive measures. The United States was disappointed that the Committee had again taken up such an unbalanced draft resolution, which demonstrated a clear and persistent institutional bias against one Member State. One-sided resolutions were purely rhetorical documents that did not help to advance peace, rather, they sought to divide at a time when unity was needed. The United States would continue to oppose every effort to delegitimize Israel. For the foregoing reasons, it had once again voted against the draft resolution and expressed appreciation to the Member States that had done the same.

67. **Ms. Abushawesh** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the overwhelming support for the draft resolution had affirmed principled positions and conveyed solidarity to the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights under international law. Over a month since Israel, the occupying Power, had declared its war against defenceless Palestinian civilians, it continued to terrorize them with relentless bombardments that targeted homes and civilian infrastructure, while depriving the entire population of all their basic needs. As affirmed by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the situation in Gaza was heartbreaking.

68. It was unbelievable that some still spoke of the right to self-defence of an occupying Power that sought blind vengeance through the forced transfer and annihilation of the Palestinian people. No right in the world permitted the slaughter of a people. Moreover, it was deplorable and unforgivable that the world was watching the killing of over 10,500 Palestinians, the majority of whom were children, women and older persons. Over 26,000 people had been injured, with over 2,500 trapped under rubble. In the West Bank, over 160 Palestinians had been killed and 2,400 injured within one month. Not only were those numbers rising rapidly, they also represented shattered dreams, hopes and aspirations.

69. The scope and scale of the events in Palestine were beyond human comprehension. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) had reported that on day 18 of the conflict, the unprecedented scale of death and destruction had surpassed all the previous military escalations combined. Unquestionably, the situation had thus unfolded because Israel had been permitted to behave as a State above the law. That country had not borne a single consequence for its illegal policies and practices. Instead, it had been emboldened not only to continue subjugating Palestinians and occupying their land, but also to slaughter them at will and drench their land with blood and ruin. Meanwhile, the Palestinian people continued to be denied international protection and all their rights under international law.

70. Her delegation recognized and expressed profound appreciation to the countries that had stood firmly against those violations and crimes, proving that the international community had not relinquished international law. Only genuine and practical measures could change the current catastrophic situation and give hope for a future of justice and peace. The State of Palestine thanked all Member States that had voted in favour of the draft resolution.

71. **Mr. Al Nahhas** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the draft resolution reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Syrian population in the occupied Syrian Golan and the Palestinian people over their natural resources. The report prepared by ESCWA on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan ([A/78/127-E/2023/95](#)) had shown that the Israeli actions not only violated international law, they also undermined regional stability and hindered achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition to the exploitation of natural resources, the Israeli occupying Power also continued to commit crimes and massacres against the Palestinian people, disregarding all international laws, including international humanitarian law. The ideology of the occupying entity was based on killing and terrorizing in order to occupy more land for purposes of demographic change in the region. Over 11,000 Palestinians, including 4,000 children, had been killed.

72. Many United Nations resolutions had called for Israel to cease the exploitation of natural resources in the occupied Syrian Golan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. However, Israel and its supporters only implemented international law when it suited their purposes to do so, and failed to recognize any resolution

that supported justice for the Palestinian or Syrian people in the occupied Syrian Golan. The occupying Power continued to destroy and exploit the natural resources in the occupied Syrian Golan, depriving Syrian Arabs of their rights, including depriving Syrian farmers of access to water; increasing and expanding settlements; confiscating land and private properties; imposing restrictions on Syrians who refused to obtain Israeli nationality; building wind turbines that constituted a serious threat to the food, water, security and health of Syrians in the Golan; and other grave violations of international law and Security Council resolutions.

73. No matter how long the occupation of the Syrian Golan and Palestine might last, those lands would remain Arab and would sooner or later be returned to their rightful owners. The international community must ensure that Israel, the occupying Power, complied with its will and resolutions and ended its criminal occupation of the occupied Arab territories.

74. **Mr. Jadoon** (Pakistan) said that the adoption of the draft resolution was an expression of solidarity with those who had been enduring unrelenting oppression from Israeli occupation forces, and an affirmation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources. The dire security and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly the Gaza Strip, was deeply concerning. Close to 11,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, had lost their lives, and a lack of essential supplies meant that others faced starvation as part of a struggle to survive.

75. The actions of Israel were a flagrant breach of several United Nations resolutions and of international law, including international humanitarian law, and amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Pakistan called for an immediate ceasefire, unimpeded humanitarian access and an end to the forced transfer of the population in Gaza. The international community must also work towards a just, comprehensive and lasting two-State solution, with a viable, sovereign and contiguous State of Palestine on the basis of pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

76. **Mr. Roeder-Messell** (Germany) said that his delegation understood the decision to avoid undertaking controversial and lengthy negotiations on the relevant resolutions under the current circumstances. However, it should be noted that the texts under consideration neither reflected nor addressed the developments that had begun with the horrendous crimes committed by Hamas on 7 October 2023. On that understanding,

Germany had maintained its previous voting pattern for draft resolutions [A/C.2/78/L.44](#) and [A/C.2/78/L.21](#).

77. His country stood in solidarity with Israel and condemned, in the strongest possible terms, the heinous acts of terror by Hamas. It reiterated its call for Hamas to immediately release all hostages, many of whom were European citizens, without any preconditions. Israel had the right to defend itself in accordance with international law. The situation of the civilian population in Palestine must be alleviated, and international law respected. Efforts towards a meaningful peace process should be guided by the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law, allowing Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in peace and security, in two independent States.

78. **Mr. Ben Naftaly** (Israel) said that his delegation viewed the draft resolution as one-sided; it ignored inconvenient facts and was based on biased thinking. Regrettably, recent worldwide geopolitical tensions had generated numerous threats and hampered efforts to achieve sustainable development for all. Nonetheless, the Second Committee had chosen to unjustly single out Israel by way of two draft resolutions, without extending such treatment to any other Member State.

79. While the draft resolution related to the natural resources of the Palestinian people, it should be noted that every resource that had come the way of Hamas had been diverted for the death machine of that organization. Metal for water pipelines was used for deadly rockets; concrete for civilian infrastructure was used to reinforce Hamas terrorist tunnels; food and water for civilians was stockpiled for terrorists; and fuel was diverted from hospitals to power Hamas terrorist activities. Evidence had been presented to back those facts, which were also boastfully attested to by Hamas itself. The draft resolution, together with the silence of ESCWA, only served to encourage terrorists such as Hamas, all of which had contributed to the horrific massacre of 7 October 2023. For those reasons, Israel had called for a vote on the draft resolution and had voted against it. His delegation appreciated those who saw the draft resolution for what it was, and who did not support the ongoing exercise in hatred.

80. **Ms. Özgür** (Türkiye) said that the ongoing carnage in the Gaza Strip was a matter of deep concern. An immediate ceasefire was needed to put an end to the unbearable human tragedy under way, which included loss of the lives of thousands of innocent civilians, mostly children and adolescents. Over 2 million Gazans were in dire need of humanitarian assistance, and were being subjected to acts of collective punishment and

attempts at forced displacement. International law and international humanitarian law were constantly being violated, and the potential spillover of the conflict to the wider region posed a serious threat. More must be done by the international community, with a view to reaching an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and prioritizing the urgent humanitarian needs of the civilian population of Gaza. There could be no excuse or justification for depriving millions of food, water, electricity and fuel; international humanitarian law should be upheld.

81. Current events were the end result of decades of occupation. Lasting peace and security in the Middle East could only be achieved through a political solution, based on a two-State vision and pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent, sovereign and geographically contiguous State of Palestine.

82. **Mr. Momeni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that a genocide and war crimes were currently under way in Gaza as a result of the ongoing occupation over seven decades. The rights and dignity of the Palestinian people had been trampled by the Israeli regime, forcing them to leave their homes and denying them their inalienable right to self-determination. The imminent ground invasion of the Israeli regime into Gaza constituted a humanitarian disaster that would seriously threaten regional and global peace and security. Regrettably, the response of the international community to such severe violations had fallen short in ensuring accountability, and its failure to intervene was leading to a fully-fledged humanitarian crisis, with far-reaching consequences.

83. The Golan was an integral part of Syrian Arab Republic territory. All measures taken by the Israeli regime to undermine the territorial integrity of that country, including through its ongoing occupation, were condemnable. The international community and all Member States, particularly those in the Security Council, should shoulder their responsibilities and take decisive action to force the Israeli regime to cease its aggression, occupation and atrocities, and to steadfastly adhere to its international obligations, including those under international humanitarian and human rights law.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

84. **Ms. Abushawesh** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the statement of the representative of Israel was typical behaviour by the occupying Power, which persisted in distorting the reality of its brutal and illegal colonial occupation, and denying the violations and crimes that had been perpetrated against the entire Palestinian civilian population for decades. Such

distortion sought to conceal the reality of an occupying Power that abused and violated the rights of an entire people, who continued to struggle for their freedom and the realization of their fundamental and inalienable rights.

85. The draft resolution and the report of ESCWA were not biased, nor did they single out Israel. In fact, the occupying Power's blatant, deliberate and grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, as well as its complete defiance of the United Nations and its resolutions, were what singled out Israel. That country continued to behave as though it were a State above the law. Israeli extremist settlers on the ground and officials had continued to spread hate against the Palestinian people over many years. Warnings of a greater Nakbah were being given, alongside genocidal threats against and vows to crush the Palestinian people, who had been labelled as "children of darkness", "monsters" and "human animals". A former Israeli minister had explicitly called for the erasure of all of Gaza from the face of the Earth, stating that "Gazan monsters" had the option of heading to Egypt or dying. Another Israeli minister had proposed dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza.

86. It was evident that the war was intended either to forcibly transfer the Palestinian people outside of Palestine or to annihilate those who would not leave. Therefore, the choice for the Palestinian people was stark: either to leave their country or to die, in line with the annexationist apartheid plans of the current extremist far-right Israeli Government. The same plan had been pursued over 75 years to dispossess and displace the Palestinian people and to deprive them of their inalienable rights. It had been exemplified in September 2023 when the Israeli Prime Minister had addressed the General Assembly and displayed a map portraying all of historic Palestine as Israel, without any indication of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, nor of the 1967 green line demarcating the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Such cynical plans had also become evident in a leaked document prepared by the so-called Israeli Intelligence Ministry, which confirmed that Israel was attempting to relocate Palestinians from Gaza to 10 cities in Sinai, Egypt. Her delegation unequivocally rejected such transfer plans in any form. The Palestinian people had suffered the Nakbah in 1948, and would never allow it to happen again.

87. It was incomprehensible that some could watch a Member State commit war crimes and crimes against humanity and make explicit genocidal threats, and still speak of the right to self-defence. The occupying Power had no such right; its actions were illegal, immoral and

unjustifiable under any pretext, and such claims must be condemned and rejected. The law should be the measure by which all were judged, rather than propaganda and hateful biases steeped in racism and double standards. After 56 years of illegal foreign occupation and 75 years of an ongoing Nakbah, it was high time the international community acted urgently to uphold international law and to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions, in order to end the impunity of Israel, its siege, blockade and barbaric aggression on Gaza, its illegal and immoral colonial occupation and apartheid regime, and the grave injustice experienced by the Palestinian people.

88. **Mr. Ben Naftaly** (Israel) said that the suffering in Gaza, resulting from the decision by Hamas to declare war upon Israel, was heartbreaking. No one wanted to be in the current situation. Israel had neither started nor wanted the current war, which had been declared by Hamas through its massacre on 7 October 2023. With horrifying cruelty following its invasion, Hamas had tortured and mutilated children in front of their parents before executing them and burning whole families alive. Hamas also exploited the civilians of Gaza, preventing temporary civilian evacuation from combat zones, seizing humanitarian aid and firing rockets indiscriminately from within dense urban areas. Part of its strategy was to embed armaments and terrorist cells within, adjacent to and beneath hospitals, schools, mosques and United Nations facilities, among others. That practice constituted a war crime.

89. Israel was doing everything it could within Gaza to get civilians out of harm's way, including warning them for three weeks to exit northern Gaza temporarily for their own safety. It had also facilitated humanitarian corridors to enable the people of northern Gaza to get out of the way until the fighting ended and Israel had proceeded to destroy the terrorists. Hamas was a genocidal, jihadist terror organization that had openly vowed to repeat the atrocities of 7 October 2023 until they had killed every man, woman and child in Israel and annihilated the Jewish people. That threat must, and would be, removed.

90. With regard to the comments made by the representative of the Ayatollah regime, the complete disregard of that regime for human rights, which were fundamental to development, was well-documented and well-known. The hanging of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, the oppression of women and the export of terrorism were just some of its atrocities, all of which made the comments of the Ayatollah representative irrelevant.

91. With regard to the comments made by the representative of the Assad regime, Syria had forfeited the right to make baseless allegations or to speak about morality and abuse of natural resources owing to the ceaseless and cruel abuse of human rights by that regime against its own population, such as the use of chemical weapons against civilians, including women and children. With regard to the implicit threats made by the representative of the Assad regime, Israel recalled that in the current context of the Second Committee, focus should be given to the issues at hand. Moreover, that representative should choose his words responsibly and carefully, avoiding threats like the ones he had made. Such empty threats only highlighted the failure of that country to ensure the well-being and prosperity of its own population, in favour of advancing policies to destabilize the region.

92. With regard to the comments made by the representative of Pakistan, his delegation recommended serious reflection. The world was witnessing the brutal treatment of Afghans by Pakistan, which had chosen to expel over 1.5 million Afghan refugees, as well as its moral and administrative corruption. To Pakistan, the situation in Gaza was merely an opportunity for a smoke screen to cover up its human rights abuses.

93. **Mr. Al Nahhas** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the lectures on humanitarian law and war crimes from the representative of the occupying entity were highly hypocritical given the current circumstances in Gaza. The representative had said that geopolitical tensions were impeding sustainable development, and that Israel was being inexplicably singled out. However, geopolitical tensions did not bomb schools or hospitals; they did not request people to move from northern to southern Gaza, before bombing them en route; and they did not threaten to use atomic or nuclear bombs on civilians living within an area of 360 km. The excuse for depriving a population of over 1 million people of food and water because such supplies supposedly went to Hamas was ridiculous, and unworthy of a response.

94. **Mr. Momeni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the story of Palestine had begun over seven decades ago, and not only since 7 October 2023. The standard practice of the Israeli regime was to divert international attention away from its unlawful policies and practices by attacking others. It was ironic that a regime famous and well-documented by the United Nations for such unlawful acts as genocide, war crimes and apartheid policies allowed itself to accuse other countries in such a sinister manner. The Israeli regime could not deflect attention away from the malign and destabilizing activities in the region by waging a widespread systemic campaign of Iranophobia.

95. Iran worked tirelessly in an honest effort to contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East, combating terrorist and extremist groups. The victim mindset was the standard practice of officials of the Israeli regime, who habitually intended to portray themselves as innocent in an act of deception. The shameful objective was clear: to cover up expansionist policies, destabilizing practices in the region and criminal documents, as well as to deflect attention away from their brutality, particularly against the Palestinian people.

96. **Mr. Jadoon** (Pakistan) said that the remarks made by the representative of Israel were highly regrettable and failed to address the real issues under consideration, while seeking to mislead the Second Committee with regard to the illegal foreigners' repatriation plan of Pakistan. That plan was currently being implemented in Pakistan in exercise of the sovereign right of his country, and in accordance with its international obligations and domestic laws. It was merely intended to move illegal and undocumented individuals who had failed to ensure their status was legalized, despite being provided with sufficient time to register themselves. Pakistan, like all countries, had the sovereign right to ask aliens living on its territory to document themselves and, upon failure to do so, to request their departure.

97. Pakistan hosted one of the largest refugee populations in the world, and had hosted over 4 million Afghan refugees for over more than four decades. His country demonstrated generosity, hospitality and humanitarian spirit in hosting such a large number of refugees, and would continue to do so, working with various United Nations agencies, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to offer them assistance and protection. The delegation of Israel might have been unable to face the truth and the international censure resulting from its highly repressive policies, which had lasted for decades in oppressing an occupied people, in gross violation of international law, international humanitarian law and United Nations resolutions.

98. The Israeli occupation forces had become a killing machine; the brutality and suffering brought upon the people of Gaza and in the West Bank had been recounted by the representative of Palestine. It was highly regrettable that the representative of Israel had brought an entirely unrelated topic into the debate of the Second Committee under the current agenda item.

99. **Mr. Ben Naftaly** (Israel) said that he would take every opportunity to reiterate that the Assad regime, the Ayatollah regime and Pakistan had no moral grounds to lecture Israel. Advancing their fictitious and cruel

agendas would not change the facts on the ground. While they attempted to destroy, Israel would build back better, with its people at the centre of its efforts.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.