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Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Pieris (Sri Lanka), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 11

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

Draft resolution (A/78/L.9)

The Acting President: I shall now read out a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

“Today’s debate is an opportunity to focus on the incredible power of sports as an enabler for sustainable development and peace. Beyond the thrill of competition and the joy of the playing fields, sports permeate into the very fabric of our societies. Sports foster positive change in education, health, economic growth and social inclusion.

“One cannot underestimate the transformative role of sports in promoting sustainable development, particularly in the realms of education and well-being. The values instilled in athletes — discipline, teamwork and the sheer will to succeed and persevere — are the very same values that can motivate and shape the leaders and contributors of tomorrow.

“Sports, in their various forms, have the potential to be a game-changer, not only for personal

self-discovery and development, but also for the betterment of entire communities. Crucially, sports contribute to poverty alleviation by providing job opportunities on a global scale, thereby breaking the vicious cycles of intergenerational poverty. From coaches and trainers to event organizers and facility managers, the sports industry is a powerful engine for economic growth, injecting vitality through economic activities like sports tourism. The socioeconomic impact of major sporting events therefore cannot be overstated. Not only do they bring people together, but they also stimulate local economies, thereby creating a ripple effect that reaches far beyond the sports arena.

“Beyond their impact on development, sports are a powerful force for peace. The Olympic Games stand as a symbol of tolerance, peace and cooperation among diverse peoples, cultures and nations.

“In our relentless pursuit of equality, it would be remiss of me to conclude these remarks without commending the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for its commitment and contribution to gender parity. By allocating an equal number of quota places to men and women athletes, the IOC is not only leading by example, but also signalling a stride towards closing the gender pay gap. That approach resonates with the priority I have accorded to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment during my presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session.

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“Let us continue working together to reiterate our commitment to the values of the Olympic Truce, fostering an environment where understanding and collaboration prevail over conflict and strife. As we champion the cause of sports, let us also be reminded of their transformative power, particularly among young people, who comprise the next generation of humans to inherit this planet.

“I sound the clarion call of sports for peace and prosperity.”

I now give the floor to the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.9.

Mr. Estanguet (France) (*spoke in French*): It is with great emotion and humility that I address the General Assembly today on the subject of the Olympic Truce. It is also with a fervent conviction: that sport changes lives.

Sport changes lives, and it changed Abebe Bikila's life. As a child in the village of Jato, Ethiopia, he grazed the family herd. In 1960, unknown to the public, he owed his participation in the marathon event at the Rome Olympic Games to a stroke of fate whereby he was called upon to step in for an injured compatriot. Yet it was he, barefoot and alone, who crossed the Arch of Constantine to become the hero of a continent — the first athlete from sub-Saharan Africa to become an Olympic champion — paving the way for a long line of African champions.

He went on to win a unique double four years later in Tokyo, further consolidating his status as a legend, before suffering a serious car accident that left him paralysed. But it was thanks to sport that he began his rehabilitation and competed in a wheelchair at the Stoke Mandeville Games, the precursor to the Paralympic Games.

Sport changes lives. And it changed the life of Fanny Blankers-Koen, who was declared the best female athlete of the twentieth century, specifically because of her four gold medals at the London Games in 1948. But she is known for more than that. When we see her on 2 August 1948 at the start of the women's 100-metre race, this 30-year-old mother of two, was part of a minority of women who dared to make sport a passion. She was a pioneer who changed people's mindsets and their perception of women's sport.

For decades, thousands of athletes, men and women, such as Abebe and Fanny, touched us, made us dream, made us cry and made us proud. They are true role

models and have inspired entire generations. Because of the power and values of sport, they succeeded in helping to meet the major societal challenges and in contributing to a better, more inclusive, more egalitarian, more responsible world. As a result, they changed our lives beyond borders and differences.

Sport, in and of itself, is a veritable call for tolerance and respect. During competition, religion and cultural or social origin are of no importance. Only results matter. And, very often, diversity is even an advantage because the complementarity of profiles makes teams better. In sport, differences make the difference.

The Games are the best incarnation of the power of sport because they promote the values of sharing, tolerance and respect throughout the world. The Games blend the values of sport and the world's diversity and are universal. With more than 200 national Olympic and Paralympic committees, 54 sports, millions of spectators and more than 3 billion television viewers, the Games provide the largest gathering place in the world.

The Olympic Village, in which thousands of athletes from around the world coexist peacefully, is the best symbol of the universality of the Games. It is a place in which, regardless of nationality, gender or skin colour, living in harmony and with respect for others is possible. The Village is humankind in one place, in all of its diversity. Like the General Assembly, with representatives of various countries, the Village and its athletes help to show us that a better world is possible.

In my sporting career, I was fortunate enough to be able to participate in four Olympiads. Above and beyond high points in sports and competition, my most vivid memories are of the space of brotherhood in the Olympic Villages. They are memories of sharing, discovery and exchanges with athletes from all continents of the world, all brought together by the love of sport and the desire to be present at the most important meeting in their careers.

The Games mean the whole world together in the same place, but they also mean the whole world looking on and experiencing the same emotions at the same time — from Kingston to New Delhi, from Sydney to Nairobi, everyone holds their breath while watching the performance of 15,000 Olympic and Paralympic athletes. The Games are universal because they speak to us in a language that we all understand, men and women alike. And that is the language of emotions.

Of course, we know that the Games cannot do everything. But we believe that the Games are extremely inspiring because they show us what we have in common rather than what divides us. In the current context of conflict and tensions, with which we are all familiar, we are convinced more than ever before that we need the Games.

After a 100-year absence, France, the homeland of Pierre de Coubertin and the country that revived the modern Games, will organize the XXXIII Summer Olympic Games on its territory. And, for the first time, our country will also host the seventeenth Summer Paralympic Games. France has been preparing for them for several years now and looks forward to welcoming the world. It is a historic moment that we are preparing to face and a great honour for the organizing committees of the International Olympic Committee and International Paralympic Committee, which I chair.

This honour also comes with an acute sense of responsibility to perpetuate the universal and powerful ideal of the Games. That is why we chose the slogan, “Games Wide Open”, which is more than a slogan; it is a vision that permeates our entire project. In making the Games wide open, we will go as far as possible in celebrating the universality of the Games. We will transform Paris into an Olympic and Paralympic Park, as we welcome the world with memorable Games, in a spirit of communion between the athletes and the public.

On 26 July 2024, the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games will pay tribute to the universal values of sport, with a completely unprecedented concept — a boat parade along the Seine with athletes from delegations from around the world. Throughout the Games, the most iconic monuments will become competition areas in the service of sport at the heart of the City of Light. Celebration sites will be open for the wider public, such as Champions Park in front of the Eiffel Tower, to celebrate Olympic medallists from around the world.

Games Wide Open also means a commitment to the Games being in line with Sustainable Development Goals and to the implementation of the Paris Agreement. With the support of Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee, whom I would like to thank, and that of all our public and private partners, Paris 2024 is focused, first and foremost, on the environment, by reducing carbon emissions by half as compared to previous events. For the first time in

history, there will be 100 per cent parity between men and women in our Olympic Games — and women in particular will be honoured.

The Paralympic Games will also contribute to building a more inclusive society to change the way we view persons with disabilities. We also wanted our Games to leave a sustainable and useful legacy for our society, especially for younger generations to develop sporting activities to improve their health and well-being.

We come to the Assembly today with a strong message — a universal message for peace, in line with the ancient Greek tradition of the Olympic Truce. I would like to thank all of the delegations that supported and co-sponsored draft resolution A/78/L.9, in close cooperation with the International Olympic Committee. It is with humility, given events around the world, but also with a deep-seated conviction, that I stand before the Assembly. More than ever before, sport has a role to play, and it can help us take a step towards a better world. The Paris 2024 Games are ready to do their part.

At our prestigious institution, it is my honour to introduce the draft resolution for a better world for sport, ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

Mr. Curran (European Union): I deliver these remarks on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

I would first like to express my sincere appreciation to the facilitator, Mr. Olivier-Gabriel Richard of France, and all participating delegations for their dedication to these important negotiations. The European Union stands united in endorsing and fully supporting the adoption of draft resolution A/78/L.9.

The Olympic Truce, echoing the ancient Greek tradition of *ekecheiria*, serves as a powerful symbol of our collective commitment to peace, unity and understanding among nations during the period of the Olympic Games. This commitment holds particular significance in the current global context.

The EU acknowledges the commendable merits of the Olympic Truce resolution and its potential to foster international cooperation, encourage dialogue and mitigate conflicts during this prestigious global

event. As a group that upholds the values of diplomacy, collaboration and peaceful coexistence, the EU firmly believes that the Olympic Truce aligns seamlessly with its dedication to a world in which differences are resolved through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

We extend our gratitude to the facilitator for navigating the complexities of the negotiations and for producing a balanced text. We commend the steadfast commitment to preventing the politicization of the draft resolution and adhering to agreed language that facilitates consensus.

As we look forward, we extend our best wishes to France in its preparations for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. In addition, we extend our heartfelt best wishes to all the athletes who will participate in the Games, hoping for their success and a celebration of global unity.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank the President for convening this annual debate on sport for development and peace. My thanks also go to the President of the Paris 2024 Organizing Committee for introducing draft resolution A/78/L.9, entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, and to my colleague and friend, the Permanent Representative of France, for co-facilitating the draft resolution, which Morocco is pleased to co-sponsor.

I would like to highlight the essential role that sport plays in advancing the development of peace and social progress, as well as the crucial way it supports both physical and mental health. We welcome the recognition of sport as an important factor in sustainable development that contributes to the empowerment of women, young people and persons with disabilities. Sport remains a vehicle for peace, tolerance, mutual respect and coexistence. By teaching tolerance and understanding among peoples and cultures, sport is a vehicle for humanist values. It has become an indispensable element of our lives and a lifelong school of learning that we must continue to cultivate in order to foster peace and solidarity in the international arena. It is also a vital means for protecting young people against such evils as violence, extremism and drug abuse.

The social and universal dimension of sport has often been underscored by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, who has always endeavoured to create the conditions necessary for the sport sector to meet the various challenges facing it and to shine during major

sporting events. In line with the royal vision, sport is not just about training champions but also requires the establishment of the necessary infrastructure and the enactment of the relevant laws. In March 2023, the Confederation of African Football awarded its prize of excellence to His Majesty King Mohammed VI in recognition of his efforts to promote sport and to reinforce its value and sustainability beyond the African continent.

The multifaceted role of sport is at the heart of the royal vision, which focuses on the importance of expanding access to sport for men and women throughout society. Sport is viewed as a strong driver of human development as well as inclusiveness, social cohesion and efforts to fight poverty, exclusion and marginalization. Under the guidance of His Majesty, the goal of sport is not just entertainment or achieving well-being, or a means of taking part in regional, continental and international competitions; it also a catalyst for major development and construction projects.

The 2011 Constitution breathed new life into His Majesty’s efforts by endorsing sport as a right to which citizens must be ensured access by the public authorities, and is thus a vital pillar of the national strategy for the promotion of sport. As a reflection of the importance Morocco places on sport, an annual race known as “10-km for Peace” has taken place since 2007 to commemorate the International Day of Sport for Peace and Development.

At the global and continental levels, Morocco has successfully held numerous sporting events. My country has made football a driving force for success and sustainable human development. Football, which fosters passion and showcases creativity and talent, also requires a vision of the future, a long-term commitment, efficient and transparent governance and investment in infrastructure and human capital.

I would like to emphasize that Morocco has held several sporting events, providing cutting-edge sporting equipment and infrastructure in keeping with international standards, so as to meet the expectations of our continent’s athletes. In particular, Morocco successfully hosted the 2013, 2014 and 2023 iterations of the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) World Cup.

In addition, Morocco hosted and won the previous U-23 African Cup of Nations and was unanimously designated by the Executive Committee of the Confederation of African Football as host of the 2025

Africa Cup of Nations. Moreover, Morocco hosted the previous Women's Africa Cup of Nations in the summer of 2022, leading to the decision by the African football governing bodies to choose it to host the next Cup in 2024.

The Atlas Lions brought honour to Africa during their memorable performance at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, when they became the first African team to qualify for the semi-finals, competing against France, which we congratulate on winning. That match was a demonstration of the values of perseverance, self-sacrifice and transcending the limitations of the individual. Under the guidance of His Majesty, the Kingdom of Morocco is striving to enshrine those values by linking together sport and education, thereby providing more opportunities to play football, unlocking the potential of players and supporting emerging talent through personalized training.

We are also proud that FIFA has selected Morocco, along with Spain and Portugal, to host the 2030 World Cup. For the first time in the history of football, the competition will bring together the continents of Africa and Europe, the northern and southern Mediterranean, and the African, Arab and Euro-Mediterranean worlds. It will not only be a celebration of football but also a unique catalyst for social and cultural cohesion, bringing out the best in all of us — combining ingenuity, creativity, experience and resources.

Let me conclude by emphasizing that Morocco's success in sport is not limited to football. Recently, Moroccan boxer Khadija El Mardi won the heavyweight gold medal at the 2023 IBA Women's World Boxing Championships, held in New Delhi. That feat illustrates the diversity of Moroccan talent in sport. Moroccan athletes also excel in a variety of other disciplines and have won many world medals and Olympic medals. One such example is Soufiane El Bakkali, who won gold in the 3,000-metre steeplechase for the second year in a row at the 2023 World Athletics Championships, held in Budapest in August. His success has made him a true icon and an inspiring example for young Moroccans and Africans alike. His performance reflects Morocco's ongoing commitment to supporting and promoting excellence in a variety of sports, thereby strengthening our position on international sporting scene.

Finally, as a co-author of various draft resolutions on this topic, the Kingdom of Morocco is committed to working continuously to educate and protect young people in order to enable them to contribute to the global objective of building a peaceful and better world.

Ms. Tam (Singapore): My delegation thanks France for coordinating draft resolution A/78/L.9, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal".

Singapore is pleased to continue its co-sponsorship of the draft resolution, which calls for the use of sport as a tool to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation, and we welcome cooperation to maximize sport's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. Singapore also looks forward to participating in the 2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris, and we wish France every success in its preparations.

Mr. Valtýsson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Singapore takes immense pride in its long history with the Olympic movement. Our athletes competed at the Olympic Games even before our country achieved independence in 1965. In fact, our first Olympic medal came from Mr. Tan Howe Liang, who won a silver medal in weightlifting at the 1960 Summer Olympics. Sport has indeed helped to build the spirit of our nation.

Singapore believes that sport can be a valuable tool in our common quest to achieve sustainable development. We can harness sport to promote health, well-being and lifelong learning opportunities for all, which align with Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4. Singapore has implemented a national initiative over the past decade called SportCares, which enables everyone in our society, including the most vulnerable, to experience and reap the benefits of sport. Last year, SportCares launched the Youth Mentoring Programme for youth-at-risk. It also launched a partnership scheme with social service agencies that serve persons with disabilities to facilitate membership sign-ups and encourage access to sports centres. The scheme is aimed at encouraging increased organized sports participation by persons with disabilities.

Singapore recognizes that engaging in sport instils values that go beyond the scoreboard — values such as discipline, resilience, teamwork and fair play. The lessons learned on the playing field become life skills that individuals carry into their personal and professional lives. Sport can also help to shape national identity and to forge camaraderie among our citizens. For example, Singapore has built a network of sports centres, many of which are made free or available at low-cost. They have become hubs of community interaction, fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose.

Sport is also a unifying force within our region of Southeast Asia. More than 6,000 athletes, including many from Singapore, participated at the 32nd Southeast Asian Games and the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Para Games, hosted by Cambodia in May. ASEAN also views sport as integral to advancing sociocultural development and promoting peace. At its seventh Ministerial Meeting on Sports in September, ASEAN reaffirmed its commitment to implementing the ASEAN declaration on leveraging the role of sports in ASEAN community-building and achieving the SDGs.

Under the Olympic ideal, everyone is equal, regardless of their cultural background, gender or socioeconomic status. That is how, despite the many troubles facing the world today, sport continues to foster a sense of belonging and unity, bringing people together in pursuit of a common goal. In that vein, the United Nations and the Olympic movement can be said to be based on similar principles — friendship, respect and sportsman-like competition on a level playing field. Both seek to build a stronger international community that promotes tolerance and fair play. In that spirit, let us work together to create a more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable world for all.

Ms. Le Son (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): The most recent Olympic and Paralympic Games made 3 billion people dream. Every two years, we marvel at the sports achievements of the world's best athletes, at the records broken and at the unique moments of sport that each successive edition offers us. But above all, we are deeply moved by the unparalleled symbol of world unity that this competition embodies.

Beyond the sport itself, the Olympic Games make us dream of peace. From time immemorial, the Olympics have been associated with the cessation of conflict. The tradition of the Olympic Truce, which originated in Greece in the ninth century B.C., personifies that ideal, so that everyone can travel in complete safety to take part in or attend the Games.

In 1992, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decided to revive it for the modern Games. The first United Nations resolutions on sport and the Olympic ideal (resolution 48/10) and on respect for the Olympic Truce (resolution 48/11) were adopted by the General Assembly in 1993. These were the first resolutions co-sponsored by my delegation following its admission as a Member State of the Organization.

This year we are celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the admission of Monaco, and I would like to reaffirm from this rostrum the Principality's full commitment to a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal.

Monaco therefore joins the appeal launched by the President of the General Assembly in favour of respect for the Olympic Truce and salutes the efforts, in all areas, to advance peace. Respect for the Olympic Truce, from the seventh day before the opening of the Olympic Games to the seventh day after the closing of the Paralympic Games, is more than a symbol; it is an obligation — if not a legal one, then at least a moral one — to respect our common humanity and to celebrate the values of peace, friendship and solidarity that bring us together. Any violation of the Olympic Truce, in particular the outbreak of new conflicts during that period, is unacceptable. The use of force and non-compliance with international law must never be tolerated, and the violence of conflicts, whose main victims are civilian populations whose most basic rights are trampled underfoot, is unsustainable.

Paris will host the Olympic Games for the third time. The Principality of Monaco co-authored draft resolution A/78/L.9, presented by France, and wishes the French delegation, the President of the Olympic Organizing Committee and all the Paris 2024 teams every success.

This is the world's most watched sporting event, which can be used as a catalyst to promote the role and contribution of sport in many areas. In that respect, my delegation welcomes the IOC's efforts to achieve strict gender equality in the competition, by allocating exactly the same number of places to women and men. While there were only 5 per cent women at the 1924 Olympic Games, the Tokyo 2020 Games had already set a record, with 49 per cent female athletes, and the perfect equality that will be achieved in Paris next year makes us realize just how much work has been done since the past century. Beyond the Olympic and Paralympic Games, access to sport and the practice of physical activity must be guaranteed to all without hindrance, in particular to girls and women, and without discrimination of any kind.

My delegation also welcomes the efforts made by the IOC and Paris 2024 to organize the most sustainable Games to date, in line with the IOC's Olympic Agenda 2020+5 and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Indeed, the upcoming Olympics will see carbon emissions linked to the Games halved, compared to the average for the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Olympic Games. The limitation of new construction, the use of 100 per cent renewable energy, more environmentally friendly meals and the reduction of single-use plastics are all particularly welcome commitments.

Finally, we look forward to the participation of a team of refugees, as in the two most recent Summer Olympic Games. In that respect, we welcome the IOC's commitment, via the Olympic Refugee Foundation, to ensuring access to sport for displaced young people on every continent.

The contribution of sport to education, health, including mental health, tolerance, social inclusion, the empowerment of women and the integration of people with disabilities makes it an important vector for sustainable development. A truly universal language, sport can bring together people who do not know each other and who do not speak the same language, in a spirit of brotherhood and shared values. The three Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect are shared by every athlete — child or adult, amateur or professional.

Respect for the rules and for one's opponent goes hand in hand with the practice of sport. Similarly, respect for the Olympic Charter and recognition by the IOC are conditions for membership in the Olympic movement.

Monaco fully supports the mission and role of the IOC, as defined in the Olympic Charter, which also defines the reciprocal rights and obligations of the constituent parts of the Olympic movement. Protecting the independence of the Olympic movement, maintaining its political neutrality and preserving the autonomy of sport are particularly important elements of the IOC's mission and receive the full support of my delegation. The same applies to the fight against all forms of discrimination, the promotion of women in sport, the protection of athletes with integrity, the integrity of sport and the fight against doping, as well as the health of athletes.

In conclusion, the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be a great celebration of sport and will mark the history of the Games by the milestones set in terms of sustainability, climate action and gender equality. But the international context in which we find ourselves cannot be ignored.

The Olympic motto “Faster, Higher, Stronger — Together” reflects the fact that the values of sport can be found both on and off the pitch. The spirit of universality and solidarity represented by the Olympic Games must prevail when we discuss global challenges in this very Hall. Olympism embodies two key words that the world particularly needs today: solidarity and peace.

Ms. Alnesf (State of Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we welcome the fact that the General Assembly has chosen this meeting to discuss the issue of sport for development and peace. We take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the Republic of France for its efforts in facilitating the draft resolution entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal” (A/78/L.9). We are pleased that the State of Qatar has co-sponsored the draft resolution, in particular for its important parts that reflect the State of Qatar's belief that sport is an essential factor for achieving sustainable development and has a significant role in realizing peace and development by promoting tolerance and respect.

The State of Qatar is proud to co-chair, along with the Principality of Monaco, the Group of Friends of Sport for Sustainable Development. We look forward to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris in 2024. We wish the Games every success.

Recognizing the important contributions of sport to development and peace, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development did not overlook commending the role of sport in promoting tolerance and respect, as well as in empowering women, young people, individuals and societies. The State of Qatar attaches particular importance to investing in sport and sport activities. We are deeply convinced that this is also an investment in societies and peoples. Indeed, sport has the ability to strengthen the values of cooperation and understanding among all peoples. That is why my country has made tireless efforts over the years to build and develop sporting facilities, infrastructure and training sites according to international standards. The State of Qatar was one of the first States to adopt a National Day of Sport, which we celebrate every year on the second Tuesday in February.

Doha has successfully hosted major international sporting events, the latest of which was the extraordinary 2022 International Federation of Association Football World Cup. That sporting event constituted a prominent

opportunity to extend a warm welcome to millions of people from around the world and a unique opportunity to disseminate the values of peace, development and understanding among all peoples of the world. On the sidelines of the World Cup, we launched the “Scoring for Achieving Development Goals” campaign, which calls for solidarity and understanding to achieve the Goals. We are delighted that the World Cup, which took place for the first time in the Middle East and in the Arab world, was the most environmentally friendly and a legacy of peace and development. It was also an important opportunity for my country to demonstrate its Arab identity and its national culture.

Last year, the State of Qatar introduced resolution 76/259, entitled “2022 International Federation of Association Football World Cup in Qatar” (A/76/PV.67), which underscored the fact that sport plays a key role in strengthening respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It recognized the valuable contribution of sport to education, peace, gender equality, social integration and health at the local, regional and international levels.

The State of Qatar reiterates its commitment to working with all partners to continue strengthening the role of sport, in particular because it represents a collective demonstration of human values and an important tool for establishing shared links and promoting respect and understanding among various civilizations, peoples and cultures.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Olympic Truce has a long history, carrying with it humankind’s dream for peace and the persistent pursuit of peace. It is in line with the mission of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. Since 1993, the General Assembly has adopted the Olympic Truce resolution 14 times. The resolutions call for the observance of the Olympic Truce from seven days before the opening of the Olympics to seven days after its closing. The world in which we live is mired in chaos and turmoil, plagued by the instability of global security. In that context, it is of particular importance for the General Assembly to adopt a resolution calling for a truce. Therefore, China welcomes and supports the draft resolution on the Olympic Truce introduced by France (A/78/L.9). We also joined in co-sponsoring it. We wholeheartedly wish the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris every success. We also call for the upholding of

the political neutrality of the Olympic movement. We reject any politicization of Olympic events, or of sports at large.

From “One World, One Dream” to “Together for a Shared Future”, China has actively participated in the Olympic movement, carrying forward the Olympic spirit and working on the ground to enable sports to play their important part in advancing peace and development. Following the success of the 2008 Olympic Games, Beijing successfully hosted the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, which were the first Winter Olympics to be held after the word “together” was added to the Olympic motto. The Games’ success was guided by the philosophies of being safe and green and of sharing, openness and integrity. It was based on the full implementation of the Olympic Agenda 2020, and it took place despite the overwhelming challenges of the coronavirus disease pandemic. It succeeded in bringing the world together in the spirit of peace, friendship and unity, and it proved to be a minimalistic, safe and splendid event.

Sport is our common language. The Olympic movement gathers people from different ethnicities, skin colours, religions and beliefs from all corners of the world to compete on a level playing field to pursue excellence and, off the field, to exchange ideas and foster friendships based on mutual respect and on an equal footing. Sportsmen and women from all over the world come together to compete for gold and silver medals. They are rivals on the field and friends off the field. They progress together, reaping gains together and taking away with them unity and friendship. This speaks precisely to the value of the Olympic spirit — “Faster, Higher, Stronger — Together”. It is an enlightening idea for countries to get along with each other in the correct way and for the international community to embrace challenges together in the face of a convulsion of global challenges, whereby we must transcend our differences in ideology, social system, ethnicity and culture. We must reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination. We must strengthen solidarity and cooperation for the sake of our common future.

As an active participant in, and contributor to, the Olympic movement, China will join all parties to continue to carry forward the spirit of the Olympic movement, fulfil its purposes and make greater contributions to advancing peace and development and enhancing humankind’s welfare as a whole.

Mr. Alkins (Guyana): My delegation is pleased to have once again co-sponsored this resolution (A/78/L.9) on building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal. We also commend France for spearheading the process by facilitating this important text and wish them well in hosting the Games at the XXXIII Olympiad in 2024.

Twelve centuries after the Olympic Truce was established in ancient Greece to allow for the safe participation in the Olympics of athletes and spectators alike from Greek States that were at war with each other, one may be tempted to question why humankind has not yet been able to relegate wars to the dustbins of history, thereby rendering the Olympic Truce a necessity of ancient times and not of today. However, it is in recognition of the political realities in which the Olympic Games exist that the International Olympic Committee decided in 1993 to revive the Olympic Truce, in order to protect athletes and sports in general. Equally significant are the recognition of the power of sports as a unifier, a uniter and a peacebuilder, and the fact that the concept of the Olympic Truce was revived to harness the power of sport to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation more broadly. In a world where conflicts and threats to peace continue to proliferate, the role of sports is ever more integral as we promote a world of unity, tolerance and understanding among our peoples and nations.

Sports help us to develop habits that are useful throughout life. Those habits include self-discipline, which helps us to be better citizens and to achieve the goals we set for ourselves; treating others with fairness and respect, including your opponents, especially in times of challenges — a tenet of good sportsmanship — and self-discipline and leadership, which are developed through one's involvement in sports in order to help overcome adversity. Investing in and promoting sports are therefore integral to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and a peaceful world.

From millenniums past to contemporary times, the world's pre-eminent sporting competition, the Olympic Games, brings our world together and is celebrated in unifying fashion. Religion, race, ethnicity, political background and ideology — the factors that sometimes retard our ambitions for a peaceful and prosperous world — are replaced with solidarity, inclusivity, tolerance and, yes, healthy competition. It is that spirit that we must embrace as we strive to build a more peaceful and prosperous world and a stronger and better United Nations.

Guyana commends the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee and the International Olympic Truce Centre on their efforts to mobilize national sporting bodies in taking concrete actions to support and promote the culture of peace through sports. We commit to working with them to intensify our local, national and regional efforts to use sports as a tool for the development of peace and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In conclusion, Guyana and the Caribbean Community have experienced first-hand the unifying nature of sports. We are bound together by cricket, as the West Indian cricket team is composed of players from various Caribbean countries. That is a unique arrangement in the world of sports. Cricket forms part of the social glue that holds us together as a community. It brings us collective ecstasy and collective sadness too, when we lose, but more than that, it unites us as one Caribbean. Cricket is our anthem. It is in our veins; it is in our blood. As our anthem says,

“No noble thoughts brought us here to this region, but through it all, we have risen above.”

That outlook is similar to the Olympic ideal, and it is a lesson we can all draw from — we must rise above.

We once again express our full support for the draft resolution that will be adopted today.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): We are grateful for the introduction this draft resolution (A/78/L.9) by Mr. Tony Estanguet, President of the Paris 2024 Organizing Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Since the resolution on the Olympic Truce was first introduced, on the occasion of the 1994 Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway, the state of the world has changed dramatically over the past 30 years. The spirit of that resolution, entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal,” is once again gaining importance today. In that regard, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to France, the host country of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, for its initiative in presenting this draft resolution.

In 2021, after a one-year postponement, Japan hosted the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, despite the difficulties caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic. While people had to live under various restrictions, the athletes gave us dreams, hope and the strength to move forward, even under unprecedented circumstances, by showcasing their painstaking efforts throughout the Games. The Tokyo 2020 Games once again taught us the value of sports.

The Tokyo 2020 Games also produced results in various initiatives that were promoted alongside the Games. One such initiative is the realization of an inclusive society, which aims for a society where all people, regardless of disability, gender or age, can respect each other's human rights and dignity. The Tokyo 2020 Games promoted the awareness of a barrier-free mindset and expanded the use of universal design.

Another such initiative is reconstruction and regional revitalization, in which our efforts were directed towards aiding the reconstruction of areas affected by the Great East Japan earthquake in 2011 and promoting worldwide the ongoing progress on reconstruction. Japan also advanced regional revitalization through host-town exchanges between local municipal governments and athlete delegations.

Furthermore, with the aim of creating a sustainable society, the Tokyo 2020 Games achieved net zero CO₂ emissions by utilizing hydrogen energy and recycling technologies. The Games also widely promoted public awareness of sustainability and lifestyle changes. Those achievements of the Tokyo 2020 Games have contributed to their ongoing legacy today. At the same time, we will continue our efforts to expand the Olympic and Paralympic movements through "Sport for Tomorrow," Japan's initiative to promote the value of sports around the world.

To conclude, Japan hopes that the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2024 will realize the ideals and objectives of the draft resolution on the Olympic Truce and succeed as the Paris 2024 slogan says: "Games Wide Open".

Mr. Sekeris (Greece) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate France, host country of the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games, for introducing the draft resolution (A/78/L.9) entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal", to be adopted by the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session.

The United Nations has always played an important role in promoting the contribution of sport to peace and in endorsing the modern concept of the Olympic Truce. In 1993, Greece initiated resolution 48/11, on the observance of the Olympic Truce, calling on all Member States to observe the Truce during the Olympic and Paralympic Games, while stressing that the Olympic Games can serve as a catalyst for peace, development and diplomatic dialogue.

(*spoke in English*)

This draft resolution comes at the right time to remind us of the true spirit of the Olympic ideal, based on principles of peace, dignity, mutual respect, equality, tolerance, inclusiveness and fair competition, with a view to creating peaceful and thriving societies in which the spirit of fair play prevails and violence is banned. We are currently at a very critical juncture for global peace; we need useful tools and bold initiatives to promote our 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose aim is to eliminate poverty in all its forms.

Greece retains an emblematic role in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, as the historical and cultural birthplace of the Games. The goals of fair competition and personal achievement reflect the philosophical ideals of ancient Greece, establishing the tradition of the Olympic Truce, the Olympic flame and torch relay, which symbolize the enduring bond between the ancient and modern Olympics.

During the ancient Olympic Games, a truce was announced. The aim of the Olympic Truce — known as *ekecheria* in Greek and historically involving the cessation of hostilities seven days before until seven days after the Olympic Games — was to replace the cycle of conflict with a friendly athletic competition every four years, according to the legendary Oracle of Delphi. During the cessation of hostilities, athletes, artists and spectators were allowed to travel to Olympia, participate in the Olympic Games and return to their homeland in safety.

In today's world, torn by war and conflict, the meaning of *ekecheria* is more relevant than ever. Although the idea of Olympic Truce was born in the eighth century B.C., it is becoming more and more pertinent. Armed conflict, the use of weapons of mass destruction, cyberattacks and disputes for the control of space cause unprecedented suffering and pain, making the Truce even more imperative. We are not so optimistic as to expect that two weeks of Truce — as long as the Games last — will bring about peace and reconciliation all over the world and transform the grim reality in so many countries. But it is a start. It may sow the seeds and instil the conviction that only peaceful nations can prosper and thrive. We strongly believe that the young athletes who will make their honest and ethical efforts during the Games will be heralds of the Truce notion worldwide and convey the message of tolerance, goodwill and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

That is exactly why we appeal to all members of the Assembly to vote in favour of and adopt the draft resolution entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”.

Ms. Alawadhi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the President for convening this meeting on this important topic. We support the draft resolution (A/78/L.9) introduced at the General Assembly today, which the United Arab Emirates co-sponsored based on our support for the principle of sports for peace. We wish the Republic of France every success in organizing the XXXIII Olympic Games and the XVII Paralympic Games in 2024.

The world today is in dire need of finding the means to promote communication and understanding among all peoples, while supporting their development and stability, including through sport. Sport has its own unique universal language, through which it helps to overcome differences and unify communities with their cultural, linguistic and religious diversity under the banner of cooperation, mutual respect and sportsmanship. Sport provides youth with multiple opportunities and helps promote States’ economies. It also helps to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3, on good health and well-being. For that reason, it is important for the international community to continue to support, finance and make sport accessible to all, particularly in developing countries, by establishing the infrastructure and facilities that serve the sport sector.

Sport must also be harnessed as a tool to enhance the values of peace. For the United Arab Emirates, sport receives significant attention in our internal and external policies alike. We continue to invest in this important sector, and we continue to build the capacities of competent authorities, including through the implementation of the National Sports Strategy for 2031. That strategy aims to develop sport in the United Arab Emirates and to increase the number of people practicing in local and international and championships, including the Olympic Games. Adopting laws is important to promote the sport sector. My country, for example, promulgated a federal sports law to regulate all aspects of sport and make sporting events accessible to all in the country.

As part of our efforts to make sport one of the essential pillars of peaceful and prosperous societies, the United Arab Emirates is also keen to host several

sporting championships of different types at the regional, subregional and international levels. In that context, it is important to encourage States across the world to host championships if requirements are met. Championships are an important opportunity to promote convergence and peaceful coexistence among all societies. They are also an opportunity to break negative stereotypes of certain States or peoples. They also allow participants to come together, exchange expertise and learn more about their cultures. On that note, we congratulate Qatar once again on its successful hosting of the 2022 International Federation of Association Football World Cup. That was an achievement for the Arab region, and we look forward to hosting more such important championships in our region.

As wars and armed conflict spread around the world, the international community should focus on the conditions of athletes affected by those grave crises, which pose a threat to their life or prevent them from participating in championships. Recently, the Palestinian soccer team had to suspend its sporting activity because of the current escalation in the occupied Palestinian territory. One of its team players was killed as a result of the ongoing Israeli shelling of the Gaza Strip. In that context, it is important to extend protection to athletes and civilians in times of conflict, in accordance with international humanitarian law. Efforts should also continue to reach an immediate ceasefire and to restore life in the Gaza Strip.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates will continue to leverage the sport sector in order to promote the values of fraternity among peoples while looking forward to a better, safer and more stable world for all young men and women across the world.

Mrs. Mozgovaya (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): In any country, the culture of sport is an integral part of the foundation of people’s unity. It serves as a basis for social cohesion, builds values and a national spirit. People’s health, the development of physical education and sport are priorities of Belarus’ social policy. We are of the view that large-scale sport movements are the foundation of the pyramid that we call “sport of the greatest achievements”. Thanks to our consistent development of this social area, conditions for all people to engage in physical education in Belarus have been put in place.

Sport has the unique ability to inspire people to be their very best. Furthermore, it instils important values, such as fair competition, teamwork and respect

for one's opponent. Incidentally, those values are also applicable to intergovernmental relations and should be the basis for civilized interaction among countries. Sport brings together people of different backgrounds, faiths, cultures and nationalities. The ability of sport to transcend boundaries and languages barriers means that it is an effective way of strengthening lasting peace and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

This year Belarus was honoured to host the second Commonwealth of Independent States Games. More than 2,000 athletes from 22 countries across the world participated in the Games, competing for medals in 20 different sports. The entire world witnessed the creative and unifying potential of those sporting events, as well as their potential as a humanitarian instrument for what is called the people's diplomacy. We are convinced that, given global instability and divisions, we all need to continue our efforts to turn sport, which has a unique unifying potential, into a driving force for comprehensive socioeconomic development and into a means of achieving solidarity and fostering cultural diversity.

Belarus resolutely opposes the politicization of global cooperation in the area of sport. We call on the international sporting community to refrain from any discriminatory steps and to adhere to the letter and spirit of the provisions of the Olympic Charter. Our country, in turn, remains committed to developing depoliticized international cooperation in the field of sports and strengthening friendly relations among nations, as incarnated by the ideals of the Olympics.

Mr. Salerno Vega (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): In 2013, the United Nations proclaimed 6 April as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace to raise awareness of the role that sports play in promoting people's human rights and economic and social development.

As the draft resolution that we are adopting today (A/78/L.9) acknowledges, sports contribute to the promotion of peace, tolerance, solidarity and social inclusion and plays an important role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Olympic and Paralympic Games provide the opportunity to bring together diverse cultures and teach us that sports are able to inspire, motivate and unify humankind, as a whole. We will be able to see what sports are capable of in Paris, next year, where a modest number of athletes from Panama will participate. We also join the call for

us, as countries, to commit to and support athletes and ensure that the spirit of good sportsmanship always prevails, while leaving aside political, economic and social differences to thereby enable athletes to show what they are physically capable of.

At the Pan American Games, which recently took place in Santiago this year, Panama was represented by 92 athletes, who achieved the best results in the history of our country's participation in that regional competition. We achieved that thanks to the work of the National Olympic Committee of Panama in developing and implementing the Sports Talent Search and Identification Programme, which seeks out, identifies and empowers athletically talented young people. Similarly, in April, Panama hosted the championship of the Pan American Surfing Games, and we have made significant progress in achieving the Olympic goal by creating a road map for development focused on transparency, competence and integrity. In addition, sports diplomacy has enabled us to build bridges, given the fact that the universal passion for sports-related activities transcends sociocultural and linguistic barriers. It is crucial that we support human development initiatives through sports, as an instrument that promotes the values of tolerance, non-violence and solidarity within and among States.

Lastly, Panama reiterates that, in overcoming differences through sports, we will bring about a more secure, peaceful and sustainable future and therefore build a better world through peace for everyone living on the planet.

Ms. Elkou (United States of America): I am honoured to represent the United States in the General Assembly today. It is wonderful to join colleagues from the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, including Board Chair Gene Sykes and Michelle Schwartz from the Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games to be held in Los Angeles in 2028. I would like to acknowledge and thank our French colleagues, including, of course, Ambassador Ducroquet and Mr. Estanguet, for their tremendous work preparing for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

As we countdown to the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the United States is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution (A/78/L.9) on the Olympic ideal, which demonstrates our commitment to building a peaceful and better world through sports.

Sports provide a powerful vehicle to change lives, transform communities and inspire the world. We deeply believe that sports can advance common goals, such as social inclusion, gender equality and sustainability. As the draft resolution on the Olympic ideal states, sports can promote sustainable development, build tolerance and respect, foster women and youth's empowerment and drive health and education goals. We applaud all who have worked to cultivate an atmosphere of peace, development, resilience, tolerance, understanding, accessibility and inclusion at the 2024 Paris Games and other mega-sporting events. The United States appreciates the efforts of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to promote peace and human understanding through sports and the Olympic ideal. It is a pleasure to be here today with IOC President Thomas Bach.

The United States shares the IOC's vision of building a better world through sports, as well as its working principles of universality, solidarity, unity, diversity, autonomy, good governance and sustainability. The three core values of the Olympics — excellence, friendship and respect — are not only important tenets for the Olympic Games, but also for the United Nations and all Member States, as we pursue the Sustainable Development Goals. The Olympic and Paralympic Games captivate the world. There is nothing quite like the Games, and we greatly anticipate bringing the Olympic flame to United States soil in 2028. We applaud the French Government and the Paris 2024 Organizing Committee for their dedication to an event that catalyses innovation, builds sustainability in sports and leads to more just and equitable sporting events. Like our French colleagues, we are dedicated to ensuring the most sustainable, inclusive and equitable Olympic and Paralympic Games possible. Hosting such a massive event is no small feat, and we are tremendously fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from our French partners. We celebrate their success and look forward to continued close collaboration as we prepare and work towards hosting the world in 2028.

Mr. Niasse (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank the French delegation for the leadership and openness that it showed in facilitating deliberations on this important draft resolution (A/78/L.9).

Senegal would especially like to commend the United Nations on its initiatives to promote sport as a tool for peace, friendship, solidarity and development. Since 1993, the Organization has had the tradition

of adopting resolutions to that end. Since 2003, the General Assembly has included on its agenda the item entitled "Sport for development and peace". A decade later, it declared 6 April the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. Furthermore, to enable humankind to reap the benefits of sport, the United Nations revived the ancient Greek tradition of the *ekecheiria*, or the Olympic Truce, which allowed for a cessation of hostilities during the Olympic Games that would foster a peaceful environment. It was also in recognition of the United Nations contribution and ongoing commitment to peace through sport that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decided in 1998 to fly the United Nations flag at venues hosting the Olympic Games.

In that regard, I would like to commend the outstanding work of the IOC, which, through the international competitions, including the Olympic Games, is working tirelessly to build peace through the values of sport as instruments of coming together, tolerance and solidarity. Its extraordinary incentive to create sport programmes in order to promote gender equality, women's empowerment and the creation of guidelines pertaining to the institutional future of sport unquestionably demonstrate a practical commitment to achieving the ideal of a more united world.

It is worth remembering that sport is a catalyst of values for players and lovers of the game alike. As a means of communication, sport conveys a universal language that guarantees exchanges between protagonists on the field and symbolizes a strong sense of sharing. More than just a leisure activity, sport is a driving force for coexistence, erasing all differences. At the same time, sport is filled with symbols that invite us all to come together and share — a guarantee of peace. It is also a factor of tolerance and openness, serving as a true school of life, as the values it embodies are rich in lessons: self-improvement, self-esteem, humility, respect, fair play and the culture of a job well done.

With all of that in mind, Senegal has invested in organizing the 2026 Youth Olympic Games in Dakar with a view to contributing to the development of sport and promoting the values it embodies, thereby helping to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the innovative cooperation between the Organizing Committees of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Organizing Committee of the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games on the importance of

sport for youth and development. Those meetings will provide opportunities to share information and best practices and will serve as proactive frameworks for all Organizing Committees of future Games to implement new standards for more sustainable Games in line with IOC reforms.

My country is committed to integrating sport into various development programmes and recognizes its contribution to promoting peace, dialogue and reconciliation in conflict situations. That is why my delegation agreed to co-sponsor the draft resolution that we are about to adopt.

Mr. Hassan (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the delegation of Egypt welcomes the holding of this annual meeting to review the role of sport in promoting sustainable development, as sport is inextricably linked to capacity-building and strengthening common values, mutual understanding and constructive dialogue among peoples. Those concepts are all the more important as the world faces major challenges that require international solidarity.

In that text, the delegation of Egypt thanks the French delegation for presenting the draft resolution entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal” (A/78/L.9). We thank the French delegation for facilitating consultations on the draft resolution and take this opportunity to wish France every success in hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris in 2024.

Egypt continues to promote sport as an important sector that contributes to economic growth and the achievement of sustainable development, along with the empowerment of young people. In line with our Vision 2030 and based on our Constitution, Egypt guarantees the right to practice sport for all and to discover and nurture talented athletes. Moreover, Egypt continues its efforts to increase the number of youth and sport centres to build our human resources and to advance the role of sport in establishing the values of understanding, respect and non-violence. We also recognize the close link between physical and mental health and successful comprehensive development.

In its resolution 48/11 on the Olympic Truce, adopted in 1993, the General Assembly recognized that the objective of the Olympic movement is to build a peaceful and better world by educating young people through sport. Thirty years later, the General Assembly is hoping to once again adopt a draft resolution on

the subject, thereby reiterating its message in the hope of achieving a better and peaceful world, with the Olympic Games as a driver of the principles of humanity and peace.

We would consider the adoption of the draft resolution as an opportunity to reiterate our commitment to reject any attempts to undermine those endeavours and to demand an end to all violations of the right of every human being to a safe world, based on coexistence and respect for humanity and various cultures, while rejecting terrorists, terrorism and intimidation.

The question remains, however, as to whether that is possible, given the current international context. The entire world is watching as a brutal occupying force continues to kill civilians, including women, young people, children and elderly persons. The occupying force continues to bomb hospitals, schools and places of worship, and it has obstructed the supply of drinking water, food and aid in disregard of international humanitarian law and the very values of humanity itself. Can a world that is witnessing such violations and remains silent as they continue, incapable of putting an end to them, become better, safer and more peaceful, as the draft resolution demands?

Egypt once again condemns the repeated Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. We reiterate our call on international actors and the Security Council to intervene immediately to put an end to the suffering of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, to implement an immediate ceasefire without preconditions, and to ensure the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid while rejecting all attempts to forcibly displace Palestinians. Egypt hopes that the adoption of the draft resolution and its international message on the importance of peace, understanding and solidarity can serve as an opportunity to achieve all that.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting on sport for development and peace. I also thank the delegation of the Republic of France for presenting the draft resolution entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal” (A/78/L.9), which my country’s delegation co-sponsored.

Sport promotes understanding, unity and cooperation among peoples and nations. Sport in general and the Olympic Games in particular symbolize the common values of humanity, such as

excellence, friendship and respect. We are guided by those principles towards a future in which peaceful coexistence and dialogue prevail.

With respect to development, sport plays an essential role in promoting health, education and social development. Through investment in sporting programmes aimed at building stronger and healthier societies, sport contributes to effecting positive change at both the individual and collective levels. Such programmes also help to promote cultural exchanges and diplomatic dialogue, enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation in order to overcome differences.

The Kingdom of Bahrain believes in the importance of sport to achieving sustainable economic recovery. Under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and with the support of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the Kingdom of Bahrain has always been keen to participate in international initiatives aimed at promoting the role of sport in achieving peace and development in the world and conveying the Kingdom's message of support for the international community in affirming the important role of sport.

The Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain has long supported the sport sector through its programme for the 2023–2026 period, introducing several policies linked to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 on good health and well-being and SDG 17 on partnerships for achieving the Goals. Through its policies, the Kingdom of Bahrain aims to increase its participation in various sport forums, to pursue sporting achievements at the regional and global levels, to support and motivate athletes, including women, and to strengthen partnership with the private sector in order to promote and develop the sport sector.

In the context of our involvement in the international sporting arena, our belief in the Olympic ideal and the opportunities offered by sport within the framework of international cooperation, the Kingdom of Bahrain hosted the General Assembly of the International Paralympic Committee in September.

The Kingdom of Bahrain highlights the important role of sport in the lives of children, youth and adolescents. It is also important to promote a healthy lifestyle from early childhood. In that context, the Kingdom of Bahrain will host in 2024 an international school games event, with 5,000 participants from 80 countries, to promote the Olympic ideal for children and adolescents.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain stresses the importance of harnessing sport as a pillar of development and peace for a more inclusive, fairer and peaceful world for our current and future generations.

Ms. Zabolotskaya (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The historic mission and one of the fundamental values of sport lies in its unifying and reconciling role. Sport is therefore a way to bring people further together and to develop friendship, tolerance and fairness.

The traditional role of the Olympic Games is to unite nations and peoples, reduce tensions and resolve conflicts that international relations have repeatedly encountered. The Olympic Games should therefore be open and accessible to all. No one should be left out. Everyone should be able to enjoy the same benefits and joys of sport, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender or political beliefs. However, today we are witnessing just the opposite. There is a dangerous trend of political interference in sport and of turning it into an instrument for exerting political pressure.

The height of hypocrisy and cynicism is the illegal barring of Russian athletes from international sporting competitions — unprecedented in modern history — as well as attempts to deprive Russia of the right to host them in its country. Such actions attempt to make our athletes' participation dependent on not only absurd but also clearly degrading requirements.

The forthcoming 2024 Olympics in Paris are also no exception. Our Olympic and Paralympic athletes are being deprived of the dream for which they have lived and worked. They are being banned from competing for their native country, listening to its anthem and rejoicing at the hoisting of its flag. The decision of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to bar Russian athletes from the Olympic Games is politicized and discriminatory. It is also hypocritical. Would the IOC President, Mr. Bach, who is here in the Hall, tell us whether or not the IOC has recently barred athletes from countries that are parties to conflicts even though those cases can, in no way, be compared to the pseudo-justifications for barring Russian athletes?

The double standards and segregation based on nationality displayed by the leadership of the IOC are a violation of basic human rights. The international Olympic community must respect the Olympic Charter and international human rights norms prohibiting discrimination, including with regard to access to the practice of sport, as outlined in the fourth fundamental principle of the Olympic Charter.

With regard to draft resolution A/78/L.9, which has been submitted for our consideration today, Russia fully agrees with its basic tenets. We have traditionally supported it. However, this year's negotiations on the draft resolution have not led to its adoption by consensus. For reasons that are unclear to us, the facilitators decided to change the text of the traditionally adopted text of the draft resolution to include a provision that underscores the role of the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee in resolving the issue of athletes' access to the Games. The question then is, why has this text been included? Did the facilitators set out to reward these bodies for their discriminatory decisions?

My delegation proposed the inclusion of a general provision on the prohibition of discrimination in sport. In line with this proposal, States and organizations were called upon to promote various equal opportunities for the participation of all athletes in sporting competitions, without discrimination of any kind, such as discrimination based on race, language, religion, political or other convictions, national or social origin, place of birth or any other status, but that amendment was also not taken into account.

Together with other delegations, we also proposed a compromise option — to simply cite the fourth principle of the Olympic movement in the text, along with the sixth principle already mentioned in the draft text. However, the French facilitators did not agree to that either. Essentially, they made no attempt to work on the text to find a solution that was acceptable to everyone. They toed the line of a group of Western States and today presented a draft resolution that does not incorporate the principles of equal, depoliticized access to sport or the prohibition of discrimination and, therefore, does not reflect basic Olympic principles and values.

We do not accept this approach and have therefore requested that draft resolution A/78/L.9 be put to the vote. We will abstain in the voting on the draft resolution and call on other States to do the same.

At the same time, we would like to underscore that Russia is open to sport cooperation, based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination, in accordance with the spirit and principles of Olympism. We support fair and just competitions and ensuring that all countries, without exception, have equal access to full participation in the Olympic and Paralympic

movements. We will continue to assist in protecting Olympic values and in preventing attempts to create divisions in the international Olympic movement. We firmly believe that the idea of preserving a fair, equitable and depoliticized sporting movement is shared by a majority of the world's countries and will find expression in new forms of international sporting cooperation.

Russia continues to actively hold and participate in international competitions organized on such principles. We take this opportunity to invite everyone to participate in the World Friendship Games and the Games of the Future, to be held in Russia in 2024.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the President of the International Olympic Committee.

Mr. Bach (International Olympic Committee) (*spoke in French*): It is always a great honour to speak at the General Assembly. I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for his inspiring message, which was delivered on his behalf, at the start of today's very important debate. My thanks and gratitude also go to the Permanent Mission of the French Republic for submitting the draft resolution (A/78/L.9) in the tradition of previous Olympic Truce resolutions. I should also like to thank the co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, Qatar and Monaco, and the many Member States that are sponsors of the draft resolution.

(*spoke in English*)

In his opening address to the General Assembly this past September, Secretary-General António Guterres said:

“Our world is becoming unhinged. Geopolitical tensions are rising. Global challenges are mounting. And we seem incapable of coming together to respond.” (A/78/PV.4, p. 1)

Two months have passed since the Secretary-General issued this dire warning. Since then, there are few signs, if any, that the world is changing course on this dangerous downward spiral. On the contrary, I cannot remember a time when the world was facing so much confrontation, division and polarization. Despite the urgent need for global cooperation, our world is fragmenting. The scourge of war and violence is growing. Political, social and economic divisions are gaining more and more ground over solidarity and shared values.

In this fragile world, this Olympic Truce draft resolution is more relevant than ever. In these difficult times, this draft resolution is our opportunity to send an unequivocal signal to the world that yes, we can come together, even in times of wars and crises. Yes, we can join hands and work together for a better future.

The title of the draft resolution, “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, is a clear demonstration of the shared values of the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The Olympic Games can contribute to that noble goal, because the Olympic Games are the only event that brings the entire world together in peaceful competition. The Olympic athletes send the powerful message that yes, it is possible to compete fiercely against each other and at the same time live peacefully together under one roof. That is our modest contribution to peace.

The Olympic Games can make that contribution to peace only through a fundamental commitment to political neutrality and universality. Universality can be achieved only through solidarity. That is why the IOC supports all the athletes from all 206 national Olympic committees and from the IOC Refugee Olympic Team. For us, solidarity means that in the Olympic Games, and in the Olympic movement, there is no global South or global North. At the Olympic Games, we are all equal.

We can only unite the entire world in peaceful competition if we are not torn apart by political, religious, cultural or other interests and differences. We must therefore be politically neutral and stand against any kind of discrimination. That is why I would like to express my special thanks to Members for explicitly recognizing our Olympic values: universality and non-discrimination, political neutrality and the autonomy of sport, as enshrined in the Olympic Charter.

One of the aspects of non-discrimination is that athletes cannot be held responsible for the actions of their Governments or their national Olympic committees. All athletes who are qualified on the field of play and are abiding by the rules of the Olympic Charter must have an opportunity to participate in international competitions. We are also upholding the principle of non-discrimination in the context of the violation of the Olympic Charter by the national Olympic committee of Russia. We had to suspend them because they

violated the territorial integrity of the national Olympic committee of Ukraine by including, as their members, sport organizations of Ukrainian regions.

Upholding all the Olympic values is the contribution that we in the Olympic movement can make to build a better and more peaceful world through sport. But we can achieve that noble goal only if those values and, in particular, our autonomy and political neutrality, are respected and protected by all of the Member States. In that context, we unfortunately have to realize that some Governments are claiming the right to decide which athletes can compete in which competitions. Others want to decide where international sport competitions can take place. As we have just heard, one Government or two are even planning to organize their own political sport events. If those plans, especially the latter, are realized, it would make sport become a part of the political tensions and divisions in our world. That would lead to the political fragmentation of international sport. It would lead to sport competitions taking place only along political lines — with the games of political bloc A, the games of political bloc B, and so on. In such a fully politically fragmented sport, there would be no more world championships in the true sense of the word. In such a politically fragmented sport, truly universal Olympic Games would not be possible anymore.

That is why I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Members for supporting in the draft resolution precisely this: the independence and autonomy of sport, the leadership and political neutrality of the IOC and the unifying and conciliative nature of Olympic Games and sport in general. With Member States’ clear commitment to that, together we can prevent such a political fragmentation of global sport, and we can look forward with great confidence to making the Paris 2024 Olympic Games a symbol of global unity and peace. That is precisely the hope and even the expectation of billions of people from around the globe. People everywhere are exhausted and tired — of all the antagonism, hostility, hate and bigotry that they are confronted with, day in and day out, in every area of their lives. Deep in their hearts, all those people from all Member States and from all walks of life are longing for something unifying, something that brings us all together, despite the differences we have, something that gives us hope, something that inspires us to solve problems with and through dialogue, something that fosters human togetherness and something that brings out the best in us. The Olympic Games are such a unifying force.

That is why the athletes, the entire Olympic community and billions of people around the world — all of us — are looking forward to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, which will truly be the Olympic Games of a new era: more inclusive and more sustainable. They will be the first Olympic Games with full gender parity and the first Olympic Games inspired, planned and delivered in line with our Olympic agenda reforms, from start to finish. Our friends of the Paris 2024 Organizing Committee, under the great leadership of my dear friend and fellow Olympian, Mr. Tony Estanguet, are doing an outstanding job at bringing to life these first Olympic Games of a new era in all those dimensions.

A specific focus of our Olympic agenda reforms is to strengthen sport as an important enabler to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In that respect, I would like to thank the many Member States, as well as the many United Nations agencies that are partnering with us to contribute to peace, health, gender equality, sustainability, and many other Sustainable Development Goals. All those partnerships will culminate in the celebration of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

“Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”: that is our — the United Nations and IOC’s — joint response to the challenges of our turbulent times. Such a peaceful and better world is possible if we all are truly living the Olympic motto: “Faster, Higher, Stronger — Together”.

In that Olympic spirit, I call on everyone to come together to adopt the draft resolution, but even more importantly to uphold this noble Olympic Truce. Please give peace a chance.

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

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.9.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/78/L.9, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Fiji, Finland,

Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America and Viet Nam.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.9, entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic

Draft resolution A/78/L.9 was adopted by 118 votes to none, with 2 abstentions (resolution 78/10).

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

Ms. Tokarska (Ukraine): Ukraine regrets that resolution 78/10, entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, was put to the vote, as we were ready to join the consensus. We support the resolution and thank the French delegation in that regard.

(spoke in French)

We thank the French delegation for this initiative and for its tireless work in drafting a balanced text.

(spoke in English)

However, I would like to make a remark in that connection.

Ukraine has always recognized the important role of sport in promoting peace, cooperation and solidarity, and we hope that the resolution will further contribute to fulfilling that task.

We should not be surprised that the resolution was put to the vote by the Russian Federation, a country that violated the Olympic Truce three times in the modern history of the Olympic Games. In 2008, Russia invaded Georgia. In 2014, Russia invaded the Ukrainian Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk regions. In 2022, it launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine.

Leaders of Russia’s sports movement publicly support Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. They publicly promote war and make calls — on the record — to kill Ukrainians. The President of the Russian Olympic Committee has declared that it is an honour for every athlete to fulfil his military duty, in other words, killing, raping and stealing, which the Russian army has always been infamous for. Those actions are considered honourable for its athletes.

The decision of the Russian Olympic Committee to include in the regional branches of the National Olympic Committee the temporarily occupied parts of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions is another

dimension of its violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine and should be condemned.

We commend the International Olympic Committee for its decision to suspend the membership of the Russian Olympic Committee. The Russian Federation must be banned from all international sporting activities, including the Olympics, until its troops are withdrawn from Ukraine and the territorial integrity of Ukraine is restored to its internationally recognized borders.

Mrs. Mozgovaya (Belarus) *(spoke in Russian)*: The Republic of Belarus would like to thank the Russian Federation for taking the decision to request a vote on the resolution (resolution 78/10). We fully agree with Russia’s desire to get through to the global community once and for all.

Belarus has traditionally been a sponsor of the resolution and other General Assembly resolutions that underscore the contribution of sport to development and peace. We advocate the expansion of a culture of peace in the spirit of the Olympic Truce and the strengthening of mutual understanding between peoples through the embodiment of the Olympic ideals. Today Belarus voted in favour of the resolution, but we would ask that members not view the Belarusian vote in favour as our agreement with the current situation regarding international sport. Belarus can in no way be reconciled with the situation in which Belarusian Olympic and Paralympic athletes find themselves.

We strongly condemn the unprecedented discriminatory decisions of the International Olympic Committee, the Paralympic Committee and international sports federations regarding athletes in Belarus and Russia. We call for the depoliticization of international sport cooperations and for sport to be used to promote the ideals of humanism, fraternity and solidarity. In order for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris to be a truly unifying event, as mentioned in the resolution, there is first of all a need to refrain from discriminatory approaches to the participation of national teams in the Olympics. Belarus’s vote in favour of the resolution today symbolizes our hope that common sense will soon prevail and that the spirit and letter of the Olympic Charter will reign in international sport, thus ensuring the principle that sport is above politics.

Ms. Mustafa (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: My country’s delegation is taking the floor to explain its vote after the voting on the resolution entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal” (resolution 78/10).

My country's delegation abstained in the voting on the resolution to express our absolute rejection of the ban imposed on the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes in international championships. That is a significant politicization of sport competition and distortion of the values of sports and the Olympics. Moreover, our position is in line with the reasoning presented by the Russian delegation, including general wording that ensures the participation of all athletes without politicization, which was rejected by the sponsor of the draft resolution, in contradiction of the adopted approach of drafting draft resolutions at the United Nations, which is supposed to seriously address the concerns of all States and delegations without excluding anyone.

During the adoption of the resolution by the General Assembly today, the Assembly should have taken into account the important fact that banning athletes' participation in the Olympic Games under their national flag is a deviation from the Olympic values, which are supposed to enshrine a culture of peace, fraternity and solidarity beyond any political, religious or ethnic considerations.

In conclusion, my country's delegation deplores the temporary suspension of the activities carried out by the Palestinian football team due to the escalation in the Palestinian occupied territories and the killing of one of its players as a result of Israel's continued bombing of the Gaza Strip. I reiterate my country's absolute condemnation of the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Israeli entity against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

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

The exercise of the right of reply has been requested. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Richard (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank all those delegations that voted in favour of the resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" (resolution 78/10), of which we were the penholders, in close cooperation with the International Olympic Committee.

Until now, this text had always been adopted by consensus, as it carries a universal message for peace by reviving the ancient Greek tradition of an Olympic Truce. France is committed to that message and has not broken

with that tradition. Despite the current international context, it drafted a consensus-based, non-politicized and universal text, taking up the agreed language from the previous resolutions. As the host country, France added its vision of sport as a driving force for peace, sustainable development and inclusion, be that for gender, disability or youth equality.

During the negotiations, we established a clear principle — returning to agreed language whenever an amendment did not enjoy consensus. Russia did not take that into account and continued to ask for a non-consensus-based adjustments to the agreed language to be included, going as far as to break the silence procedure. By making its choices and calling for a vote today, Russia has politicized the resolution, to our great regret. France once again reiterates its sincere gratitude to those Member States that supported the resolution, co-sponsored it and refused to enter into the Russian game of politicizing the resolution on the Olympic Truce.

Ms. Zabolotskaya (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have taken the floor in order to respond to several delegations that spoke today.

Today the representative of Ukraine spoke once again. She put forward her unjustified accusations against the Russian armed forces, and I would like to express my regret that this resolution, which we have always supported and was always adopted by consensus, has become a platform for this kind of statement. We would also like to point out the fact that Ukrainian athletes continue to participate in the Olympics, despite the fact that, since 2014, Ukraine has been conducting a war against people in the Donbas and has been killing them. Nobody has paid any attention whatsoever to that.

We would also like to draw members' attention to the comments made by the French delegation. We asked for a simple thing — refer to principle 4 of the Olympic Charter and nothing more than that. For some reason, that proposal was deemed unacceptable. The proposal, which talks about equal access and non-discrimination for all athletes to sport and engaging in sport. So, we must not mislead anyone — Russia is in favour of sport without discrimination, on an equal footing for all.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 11.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.