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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 10 November 2023, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Marschik (Austria)
later: Mr. Grünwald (Vice-Chair) (Slovakia)
later: Mr. Marschik (Chair) (Austria)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

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

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

Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.47: The human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation

1. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.
2. **Mr. Bellmont Roldán** (Spain), introducing the draft resolution also on behalf of Germany, said that updates to the text included references to General Assembly resolution [76/300](#) and to the most significant developments with regard to the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, including the recent decision to convene the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6. Member States were called upon to protect water-related ecosystems and to prioritize the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation in their water management policies, in particular for those affected by lack of access due to poverty or water scarcity.
3. The draft resolution had been updated as a result of the increasing interconnection between full enjoyment of the rights to water and sanitation and the well-being and sustainability of aquatic ecosystems, as well as the full alignment of water management policies with international human rights obligations, particularly in relation to development efforts. The most recent figures on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6 showed a promising increase in the number of people with access to drinking water and basic sanitation and hygiene services. However, they also demonstrated that many millions of individuals were not yet able to enjoy such rights, and that significant efforts were required to achieve universal coverage and fully realize the human rights to drinking water and sanitation by 2030.
4. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bahamas, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Chile, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Czechia, Denmark,

Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, Greece, Lebanon, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

5. He then noted that the following delegations also wished to become sponsors: Bangladesh, Gambia, Haiti, Jordan, Kiribati, Malawi and Timor-Leste.

6. *Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.47 was adopted.*

7. **Mr. Aydil** (Türkiye) said that his country attached utmost importance to all aspects of human rights, including access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Türkiye had actively engaged in the negotiations on the draft resolution and, although it had joined the consensus, it disagreed with some of the language introduced during the current session, especially that which had no direct relevance to the topic. In future, the draft resolution should remain within its scope. In that connection, his delegation did not support the singling out of one target of Sustainable Development Goal 6, as all of its targets were mutually reinforcing and should be treated holistically. His delegation also took issue with many aspects of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation (see [A/78/253](#)). The Special Rapporteur should work within his mandate, which had not been the case in 2023. Türkiye therefore dissociated itself from the first part of paragraph 3 of the draft resolution.

8. **Mr. Bin Jadid** (Saudi Arabia) said that his delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution. However, the reference to sexual and reproductive health-care services in the twenty-second preambular paragraph was at odds with the national legislative framework of Saudi Arabia.

9. **Mr. Johnson** (United States of America) said that the United States had joined the consensus on the draft resolution, in line with its commitment to making safe drinking water and sanitation services available for all, particularly marginalized, underserved or vulnerable groups. Water, sanitation and hygiene were vital to preventing the spread of disease and to delivering health care, education, nutrition and development. Moreover, supporting access to drinking water and sanitation was interconnected with promoting the health and sustainability of ecosystems, and to combating the adverse effects of climate change.

10. With regard to the draft resolution, his delegation referred the Committee to its previous statements on the matter delivered in the General Assembly and Human Rights Council in 2021 and 2022. While the United States was not a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, it recognized its commitments as a signatory. His country had joined the consensus on the understanding that the draft resolution did not alter the current state of conventional or customary international law or imply that States must fulfil obligations under human rights instruments to which they were not a party.

11. The references in the draft resolution to the human rights to water and sanitation referred to a right derived from rights contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. His delegation disagreed that the right to safe drinking water and sanitation was inextricably linked to or otherwise essential to the enjoyment of other human rights, such as the right to life as understood under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. To the extent that access to safe drinking water and sanitation was derived from the right to an adequate standard of living, it was addressed under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which imposed a different standard of implementation. The State's duty to protect the right to life by law did not extend to addressing general conditions in society or nature that could threaten life or prevent individuals from enjoying an adequate standard of living. In addition, the United States did not accept all of the analyses and conclusions in the reports of the Special Rapporteur mentioned in the draft resolution. For additional explanations of its positions, his delegation referred the Committee to its general statement delivered on 3 November 2023 (see [A/C.3/78/SR.47](#)), which was also available on the website of the United States Mission to the United Nations.

12. **Mr. Niasse** (Senegal) said that his delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution. Millions of people worldwide did not have access to water, and 80 per cent of contemporary diseases were waterborne. Population growth, rapid urbanization and multiple pressures from agriculture and industry highlighted the importance of water resources, which represented a source of life and well-being, and required a spirit of cooperation.

13. The trend towards the systematic proliferation of terms within United Nations texts that did not enjoy consensus and were at odds with national realities represented a threat to the draft resolution under discussion, as well as other similar resolutions. His delegation dissociated itself from any unclear,

non-consensus-based terms, and recalled that terms related to sexual health or gender would be understood in accordance with the legal and cultural realities of his country.

14. **Ms. Bananken Elel** (Cameroon) said that her delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution. However, while treaty bodies made an important contribution towards the implementation of ratified treaties, their general comments were an expression of expert opinion, and could not be considered as legally binding or as sources of international law. In addition, her delegation understood the reference to the outcome documents of the review conferences to pertain solely to documents that had been agreed upon by the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council. For Cameroon, the term "menstrual health" did not relate to the promotion of fertility regulation methods, including induced abortion. In that connection, references to sexual and reproductive health-care services would be interpreted in accordance with her country's national legislation, including with respect to the right to life and the right of parents or legal guardians in relation to children. Furthermore, her delegation understood the term "gender" and all related terminology to refer only to the biological male and female sexes. Cameroon was grateful to the co-facilitator for refraining from introducing more non-consensus-based references into the text, including those relating to multiple forms of discrimination and women in all their diversity. Her delegation dissociated itself from any such references in all of the draft resolutions adopted or to be adopted by the Committee during the current session.

15. **Ms. Dabo N'diaye** (Mali) said that her delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution. However, the general comments referenced in the seventh preambular paragraph were not considered to be universally accepted, and the outcome documents of review conferences referenced in the tenth preambular paragraph were understood to be solely those agreed upon under the auspices of the General Assembly. Meanwhile, the twenty-second, twenty-sixth, twenty-ninth and thirtieth preambular paragraphs, as well as paragraph 4 (g), involved the promotion of activities that were not in conformity with Malian legislation. The same was true of the interpretation of the term "gender" and the understanding of the right to life and the right of parents and guardians. Her delegation would interpret any non-consensus-based terms or provisions, including in [A/C.3/78/L.21/Rev.1](#) and [A/C.3/78/L.22/Rev.1](#) and other draft resolutions to be considered, in accordance with the legislation and development priorities of Mali, including its social, religious and cultural values.

Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.50: International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

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

17. **Ms. Squeff** (Argentina), introducing the draft resolution also on behalf of France and Morocco, said that, in terms of updates in 2023, the text highlighted that enforced disappearance was prohibited under all circumstances, and States were urged to continue to respect their obligations under international law. It also recognized that new technologies could prove instrumental in offering better protection against enforced disappearances. The draft resolution took note of the project to organize a world congress to promote the ratification of the Convention in 2024 and encouraged States to participate in that initiative, as well as the recommendation made by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances that Member States adopt all necessary measures, including through new technologies, to preserve and facilitate access to archives that might contain relevant information on enforced disappearance. The text also highlighted the recommendation of the Working Group that encouraged Member States to cooperate with each other and provide mutual assistance in the use of new technologies and legal assistance to facilitate the search for disappeared persons. Lastly, it took note of general comment No. 1 (2023) on enforced disappearance in the context of migration, adopted by the Committee on Enforced Disappearances.

18. Ratification of the Convention was an obligation, representing a debt that was owed to the victims of forced disappearances and the families of disappeared persons worldwide. The international community was responsible for ending that grave human rights violation.

19. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Haiti, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Maldives, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Tunisia, Ukraine and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

20. He then noted that the following delegations also wished to become sponsors: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Mali, Niger and Tuvalu.

21. *Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.50 was adopted.*

22. **Mr. Johnson** (United States of America) said that his delegation had joined the consensus on the draft resolution. Enforced disappearances were devastating, both to the victims and to their families. The United States was not a party to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and clarity was needed with respect to the international legal basis of the relevant paragraphs of the draft resolution. In that regard, the obligations articulated in the seventh, eighth and ninth preambular paragraphs applied only to States that had undertaken those obligations as parties to the Convention, and the draft resolution did not create any new rights or obligations.

Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.51: Strengthening the role of the United Nations in the promotion of democratization and enhancing periodic and genuine elections

23. **The Chair** said that draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.51 and the amendments thereto contained in A/C.3/78/L.66, A/C.3/78/L.67, A/C.3/78/L.68 and A/C.3/78/L.69 had no programme budget implications.

24. **Ms. Millard** (United States of America), introducing the draft resolution, said that the draft resolution supported the Electoral Assistance Division in its work to help democracies and countries undergoing democratization to build fair and sustainable national electoral systems. It also promoted the universality of democratic values based on the free will of peoples and their full participation in all aspects of public affairs, including the need for free and fair elections in which all citizens could participate. The draft resolution emphasized the importance of including all women and girls in political processes and recognized the need to ensure political participation and voting by citizens who were marginalized and underrepresented. It also emphasized the importance of media freedom and freedom of expression during elections, underscored the crucial role that a free and independent press played in keeping citizens informed at all stages of elections, condemned attacks against journalists and media workers and reaffirmed the need for all Member States to respect and protect the right to freedom of expression.

25. Her delegation called upon Member States to uphold and promote the commitments that they had made in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in

particular the commitment that the will of the people, as expressed through periodic and genuine elections, should be the basis of government authority. Moreover, her delegation condemned any manipulation of electoral processes that undermined the free expression of the will of the electors. Elections should be representative of a diverse and vast electorate, and all eligible citizens needed to be free to participate in order to achieve a truly fair result.

26. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Israel, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Norway, Palau, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia and Thailand.

27. He then noted that Liechtenstein also wished to become a sponsor.

*A/C.3/78/L.66: amendment to draft resolution
A/C.3/78/L.51*

*A/C.3/78/L.67: amendment to draft resolution
A/C.3/78/L.51*

*A/C.3/78/L.68: amendment to draft resolution
A/C.3/78/L.51*

*A/C.3/78/L.69: amendment to draft resolution
A/C.3/78/L.51*

28. **Mr. Kashaev** (Russian Federation), introducing the amendment contained in document [A/C.3/78/L.66](#), said that the draft resolution emphasized the link between elections, freedom of expression and media expression. Although such a link existed, the text reflected only the point of view that freedom of expression was absolute. His delegation and others had proposed that the text be made more balanced, but those suggestions had not been accepted, and his delegation was compelled to submit an amendment to the draft resolution.

29. The fortieth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution referred to only one component of freedom of expression in line with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The text did not mention that the Covenant also established that the right was related to special responsibilities and could be limited by law, or that, in the context of free expression, propaganda for war and the spread of national, racial and religious hatred should be prohibited. That point was particularly important in the context of elections, given that extremist political forces used hate speech to

incite racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia and hatred against Christians, people of African descent and migrants. His delegation therefore proposed the inclusion of an additional preambular paragraph to address such points and called on all delegations to support the amendment.

30. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the amendment: Belarus, Burundi, Egypt and Syrian Arab Republic.

31. **Ms. Rizk** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of a group of 47 countries and introducing the amendments contained in documents [A/C.3/78/L.67](#), [A/C.3/78/L.68](#) and [A/C.3/78/L.69](#), said that the first amendment proposed that, in the tenth preambular paragraph, which highlighted the importance of including women in election processes, the words “in all their diversity” should be deleted, since the term did not have a clear definition and that would make it difficult for Member States to implement the provision. The words “with men” should also be inserted after “on an equal basis” to make it clear with whom women should be included on an equal basis in political and election processes.

32. Concerning the second amendment, the twelfth preambular paragraph referred to General Assembly resolution [76/176](#). However, during the Committee's consideration of that resolution at the seventy-sixth session, amendments to the text had been presented and delegations had disassociated themselves from controversial terms contained therein. As such, the sponsors of the amendment could not accept reference to that resolution in the text.

33. The third amendment proposed that the list of forms of discrimination, contained in paragraph 7, should be reformulated using language from target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, relating to social, economic and political inclusion. The proposed language was comprehensive and took into account the interest of the penholder of the draft resolution to include other elements in the list. The proposed language also did not include controversial reference to sexual orientation and gender identity, which was an alien concept that did not enjoy consensus within the United Nations and was therefore not relevant to the draft resolution.

34. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Burundi and Zimbabwe had become sponsors of amendments [A/C.3/78/L.67](#), [A/C.3/78/L.68](#) and [A/C.3/78/L.69](#).

35. He then noted that the United Republic of Tanzania also wished to become a sponsor of those three amendments.

36. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on the amendments contained in documents [A/C.3/78/L.66](#), [A/C.3/78/L.67](#), [A/C.3/78/L.68](#) and [A/C.3/78/L.69](#) and said that recorded votes had been requested.

Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting

37. **Mr. Danailov Frchkoski** (North Macedonia) said that it was of extreme importance that reference to vulnerable groups should remain in the draft resolution, since individuals who were members of such groups were more likely to be denied their right to free and fair elections and were more often victims of discriminatory acts carried out with impunity by government authorities. It would send the wrong message to all vulnerable groups mentioned in the text if the General Assembly were to decide that their marginalization or vulnerability did not warrant attention. His delegation would therefore vote against the amendments and called on other delegations to do the same.

38. **Ms. Nishihara** (Chile) said that her delegation rejected the amendments introduced by the representative of Egypt, which aimed to roll back the language used in the draft resolution to refer to vulnerable or marginalized groups. It was of extreme importance that such reference should remain in the draft resolution, since individuals who were members of those groups were more likely to be denied their right to free and fair elections and were more often victims of discriminatory acts carried out with impunity by government authorities. It would send a dangerous message to all vulnerable groups mentioned in the text if the General Assembly were to decide that their marginalization or vulnerability did not warrant attention. Her delegation would therefore vote against the amendments and called on other delegations to do the same.

39. **Ms. González** (Argentina) said that the application of international human rights law was governed by the principles of universality and non-discrimination, in accordance with article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provided that all human beings were born free and equal in dignity and rights. No exceptions were allowed. All human beings had a right to protection under international human rights law, and, consequently, States should guarantee the exercise of the right to participate in public affairs without distinction. States needed to provide effective guarantee against multiple

and intersecting forms of discrimination to ensure that the rights of all persons were protected in line with international law.

40. The removal of language on diversity and the list of forms of discrimination in paragraph 7 would weaken the draft resolution and would represent a step backwards for the international community. No person should be denied their ability to participate in elections or exercise their democratic rights because of who they were. Her delegation would therefore vote against the amendments introduced by the representative of Egypt and called on other delegations to do the same.

41. **Mr. Hamer** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland, said that the seven delegations strongly supported the draft resolution and welcomed its focus on media freedom and freedom of expression, which were fundamental parts of a vibrant democracy and a culture of accountability, and on inclusion. In many countries, certain groups faced barriers to participation in public and political life, such as unpaid care and domestic work, sexual and gender-based violence, limited accessibility of polling stations and practical and legal discrimination. For elections to be fully representative and effective, all citizens must be able to participate in them on an equal basis.

42. By seeking to change paragraph 7 to exclude key groups from the list of those that were more likely to be discriminated against and prevented from participating in public and political life, including elections, the amendments effectively suggested that some people could be discriminated against in electoral processes. A vote for the amendment was therefore a vote for discrimination. The adoption of the amendments would weaken the draft resolution by watering down key parts of the text, which had been included in the previous resolution (General Assembly resolution [76/176](#)) adopted at the seventy-sixth session. For the seven delegations, it was of utmost importance that the original list contained in paragraph 7 should be maintained. They would therefore vote against the three amendments introduced by Egypt and encouraged all Member States to do the same.

43. **Mr. Lamce** (Albania) said that his delegation fully supported the draft resolution and the view that individuals who were members of vulnerable groups were more likely to be denied their right to free and fair elections or to be victims of discriminatory acts carried out with impunity by government authorities should not be left out of the draft resolution. No one should be denied the right to freely choose their representatives through free and fair elections because of their identity,

including their gender identity. For those reasons, Albania had not joined other States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as sponsors of the amendments introduced by the representative of Egypt and would vote against the amendments.

44. **Ms. Jiménez de la Hoz** (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union and its member States regretted that amendments had been proposed for a draft resolution that promoted democratic values and the holding of periodic and genuine elections. The Russian amendment was incomplete in its description of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and reaffirmed select elements of the Covenant without explaining their relevance to the draft resolution, which was unnecessary and had no added value.

45. With regard to the first amendment introduced by Egypt, respect for women in all their diversity was a long-standing commitment, recognized in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Political systems could not function if they were not inclusive. The European Union and its member States remained committed to working towards the full, meaningful and equal participation of women and young people, in all their diversity, in all spheres of public and political life. At a time of increasing pressure regarding gender equality, it was essential to guarantee the inclusion of all women, without discrimination of any kind, as suggested in the tenth preambular paragraph.

46. With regard to the second amendment introduced by Egypt, the twelfth preambular paragraph simply recalled the previous resolution and there was therefore no reason to amend it.

47. With regard to the third amendment introduced by Egypt, the European Union and its member States regretted the decision to present a last-minute amendment that undermined the efforts of all delegations to find compromises. Paragraph 7 did not oblige States to change their national laws, but instead suggested measures to guarantee the inclusion of all citizens in electoral processes. No one should be denied the possibility of participating in elections, and the adoption of the amendment would send a wrong and dangerous message. The States members of the European Union would therefore vote against the amendments.

General statements made before the voting

48. **Ms. Dhanutirto** (Indonesia) said that, as the third largest democracy in the world, her country attached

high hopes to the draft resolution. In 2019, Indonesia had held its largest ever single day election, combining parliamentary and presidential votes and reflecting its commitment to a comprehensive election process. It had always been a source of great satisfaction for Indonesia to celebrate democracy with the participation of all and the country did so with a profound sense of its responsibility to ensure that freedom of expression did not infringe upon the rights or freedoms of others or disrupt social cohesion.

49. Her delegation therefore regretted that its hopes had not been realized during the negotiations on the draft resolution. The text showed that democracy was not yet beneficial for all. It was concerning that the current debate was not about the essence of democracy or elections, but about specific divisive references to sexual orientation and gender identity and to women in all their diversity. Indonesia had constructively engaged throughout the negotiation process and had proposed the deletion of such references, which had been highly contested during the adoption of the previous resolution at the seventy-sixth session. Those proposals had sadly been ignored, resulting in differing positions on the draft resolution. Participation in elections should be guaranteed to everyone, without conditionalities. On that understanding, her delegation would support the amendments put forward by the representatives of Egypt and the Russian Federation. It continued to express its reservation regarding references to sexual orientation and gender identity and to women in all their diversity and questioned the relevance of such references and the universality of their acceptance within the United Nations.

50. **Ms. Rizk** (Egypt) said that free and fair elections were the cornerstone of any democratic process, and her delegation believed in democratic governance, including international democratic governance. Egypt had engaged in consultations on the draft resolution in good faith and had provided amendments aimed at making it a better text for all delegations. Some minor amendments proposed by her delegation had been taken into consideration, but other crucial amendments and continuous requests to open closed paragraphs containing controversial references had not been considered, illustrating a process that was, in itself, undemocratic.

51. During consultations on the draft resolution, her delegation, in its national capacity, had proposed the language contained in the Russian amendment, but it had not been included in the text. The proposed language was of great relevance, since freedom of expression was not absolute and, in the context of elections, advocacy for hatred or hate speech must be

restricted by law, in order to safeguard the electoral process. Some political campaigns during electoral processes used derogatory statements against certain groups, such as migrant communities, to gain votes, which was not conducive to democratic governance. For those reasons, her delegation had sponsored the Russian amendment and would vote in favour of it.

52. *A recorded vote was taken on the amendment introduced by the Russian Federation and contained in document A/C.3/78/L.66.*

In favour:

Algeria, Bahrain, Belarus, Belize, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, China, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen.

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

Abstaining:

Argentina, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brazil, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ghana, India, Iraq, Jordan, Kiribati, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Panama, Philippines, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda.

53. *The amendment in document A/C.3/78/L.66 was rejected by 71 votes to 46, with 31 abstentions.*

54. *A recorded vote was taken on the amendment introduced by Egypt and contained in document A/C.3/78/L.67.*

In favour:

Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, China, Comoros, Congo, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

Abstaining:

Bahamas, Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho, Namibia, Paraguay, Philippines, Sri Lanka.

55. *The amendment in document A/C.3/78/L.67 was rejected by 84 votes to 61, with 7 abstentions.*

56. *A recorded vote was taken on the amendment introduced by Egypt and contained in document A/C.3/78/L.68.*

In favour:

Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, China, Comoros, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

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

Abstaining:

Bahamas, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guyana, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Paraguay, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Tunisia.

57. *The amendment in document A/C.3/78/L.68 was rejected by 85 votes to 55, with 12 abstentions.*

58. *A recorded vote was taken on the amendment introduced by Egypt and contained in document A/C.3/78/L.69.*

In favour:

Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, China, Comoros, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

Abstaining:

Bahamas, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Sri Lanka.

59. *The amendment in document A/C.3/78/L.69 was rejected by 82 votes to 63, with 11 abstentions.*

60. **Mr. Oehri** (Liechtenstein), speaking also on behalf of Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand and Switzerland, said that the six countries were States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and were committed to protecting and

promoting the right to freedom of expression. They strongly supported the Covenant's language and framing of civil and political rights.

61. The six delegations had voted against the Russian amendment, since it purported to mirror the Covenant's language, but omitted the provisions of its article 19 (3), under which restrictions could be placed on the right to freedom of expression only if they were provided by law and were necessary for respect of the rights or reputation of others or for the protection of national security, public order or public health or morals. The absence of such language inaccurately widened the scope for such restrictions. Had the amendment reflected verbatim language from the Covenant, the six delegations would have been able to view it differently. They could not accept language that would misinterpret the Covenant, since the right to freedom of expression was a fundamental part of a vibrant democracy and a culture of transparency and accountability.

62. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution [A/C.3/78/L.51](#) as a whole and said that a recorded vote had been requested.

Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting

63. **Mr. Kashaev** (Russian Federation) said that free elections were a key element of political life for almost all States and determined a country's development and political and State structures. The draft resolution had originally aimed at encouraging United Nations assistance and support for Member States in organizing electoral processes, but, year after year, it had diverted from its original goals and had seen the inclusion of contentious concepts that were not related to elections or electoral assistance. His delegation supported many elements of the text but believed that others were unbalanced. The Russian Federation had attempted to make the text more balanced during negotiations and through the submission of an amendment, which had been rejected. Concepts such as "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" were not universally recognized but had been maintained in the text. For those reasons, his delegation had requested a recorded vote on the draft resolution and would abstain from voting.

64. **Ms. Arab Bafrani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, in her country, dozens of elections had been held over the past 40 years; the right to vote in elections, including parliamentary and presidential elections, was observed; and the participation of all persons without distinction was fully guaranteed. Elections were held with the engagement of a broad spectrum of political thought and parties and within the framework of the

Constitution of Iran, in an epic display of democracy. As such, her delegation strongly supported the essential concept of the draft resolution.

65. Unfortunately, the penholder of the draft resolution, the United States, had chosen to follow its own narrow political agenda and impose its values on other Member States, while ignoring the divergence of views emanating from significant national and regional particularities and varying historical, cultural and religious backgrounds and legal frameworks. The United States had once again misused a noble cause in a political manner by exploiting the United Nations and its principal organs. The tension at the current meeting was the result of the facilitator unjustifiably closing paragraphs that had been the subject of a number of objections during the adoption of the previous resolution (General Assembly resolution [76/176](#)) at the seventy-sixth session. The position of all countries should have been respected and taken into consideration in a balanced manner, but there had been an attempt to hijack the subject of democracy and elections in order to impose language that had not been agreed upon.

66. Her delegation had voted in favour of all four amendments, which had aimed to balance the text, and would abstain from voting on the draft resolution. Iran reiterated its principled position of objecting to the inclusion in United Nations documents of any non-consensus-based and controversial language that lacked a common understanding among Member States. Her delegation therefore wished to disassociate itself from the tenth and twelfth preambular paragraphs and paragraph 7 of the draft resolution. It also understood that freedom of expression brought with it duties and responsibilities, in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

General statements made before the voting

67. **Ms. Sánchez García** (Colombia) said that her delegation regretted that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft resolution. Language referring to women in all their diversity was a recognition that measures to ensure women's participation should consider the reality that women were not a homogenous group. Rural women without Internet access did not have the same opportunity to stand as candidates to an election as urban women, and women born and living in poverty, without access to education or a minimum level of literacy, faced structural barriers in the exercise of their fundamental right to vote. They too were women in all their diversity, and Colombia would continue to ensure that they were not invisible at the United Nations.

68. Her delegation welcomed the focus in the draft resolution on freedom of expression and media freedom, as well as the retention of previously agreed paragraphs on persons belonging to vulnerable groups, and strongly supported paragraph 7. No one should be denied the right to freely choose their representatives through free and fair elections because of who they were. Colombia would continue to reject discrimination on any grounds, including sexual orientation and gender identity.

69. **Mr. Scheuer** (Denmark) said that his delegation fully supported the draft resolution. Some of the proposed amendments to the text had run counter to the objectives of the draft resolution, and it was regrettable that a vote had been requested on the draft resolution. Throughout history, countless individuals, groups and communities had worked to ensure that every citizen, regardless of their identity and background, could participate in democratic processes. Such movements had underscored that no one could be left behind, no matter who they were. It would send a deeply problematic message to all groups mentioned in the draft resolution if the General Assembly were to decide that their situation did not warrant attention. No voter should be denied the right to freely choose their representatives through free and fair elections because of who they were or who they loved. Member States shared a responsibility to protect and uphold that fundamental human right. The right to participate in elections was a cornerstone of democracy and the essence of self-determination and empowerment. Denmark encouraged all Member States to ensure the adoption of the draft resolution.

70. **Ms. White** (United Kingdom) said that fair, periodic, inclusive and genuine elections were essential to empower all citizens to express their will and to promote long-term sustainable democracies with respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. The freedoms of peaceful assembly, association and expression were essential to enable all persons to participate fully in political and public life. Her delegation welcomed the inclusion in the draft resolution of language in support of a free, independent and pluralistic media, which had an indispensable role in informing people at all stages of elections and promoting transparency and information integrity, including by countering disinformation and misinformation. Her delegation was dismayed that a vote had been called on such an important draft resolution for clearly political reasons and encouraged all States to vote in favour of the text.

71. *At the request of the representative of the Russian Federation, a recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.51 as a whole.*

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Mali.

Abstaining:

Bahrain, Burundi, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Eritrea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kuwait, Mauritania, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Tonga, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan.

72. *Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.51 was adopted by 146 votes to 1, with 25 abstentions.*

73. **Mr. Al Rawahi** (Oman), speaking also on behalf of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, said

that those countries had abstained from voting. They firmly believed in the importance of the subject matter, but had reservations regarding paragraph 7 of the text, which did not align with their national laws, and any other wording that was not the subject of a consensus.

74. **Mr. Rojas** (Peru) said that his country was committed to promoting an inclusive and participatory democracy that guaranteed that all its citizens were equal in voice and vote. The draft resolution reaffirmed that the electoral assistance provided by the United Nations should continue to be carried out in an objective, impartial, neutral and independent manner and on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the evolving needs and legislation of requesting countries. As such, all United Nations staff should carry out their work in strict compliance with General Assembly resolutions and relevant specific treaties.

75. **Mr. Rizal** (Malaysia) said that his country was committed to promoting and protecting democratic institutions and principles and the rule of law. As a young nation, Malaysia continuously introduced democratic reforms and had recently instituted the automatic registration of voters and lowered the voting age from 21 years to 18 years of age. As a result, more than 1.3 million young people between 18 and 20 years of age had been eligible to vote in the country's general election in 2022.

76. Malaysia had supported and sponsored previous iterations of the draft resolution. However, since the previous resolution adopted at the seventy-sixth session, the text had begun to feature non-consensus-based terminology that was inconsistent with his delegation's position, which had prevented his delegation from sponsoring the text. Malaysia had supported the proposed amendments to the draft resolution, which had been drawn from agreed language from within the United Nations and existing international instruments. The amendments had been honest attempts to arrive at a text that could be supported by all Member States. His delegation rejected any assertion that the amendments had been hostile since the paragraphs concerned had not been opened for discussion. His delegation wished to express its reservations regarding, and disassociate itself from, the terms "in all their diversity" in the tenth preambular paragraph and "sexual orientation and gender identity" in paragraph 7. In line with its earnest belief in democratic principles, Malaysia had voted in favour of the draft resolution.

77. **Mr. Niasse** (Senegal) said that his country, in keeping with its long-standing democratic culture and attachment to the rule of law, was committed to democracy as a cornerstone of the political participation

of all. His delegation had voted in favour of the amendments introduced by Egypt concerning the tenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 7 in order to reiterate its opposition to the use of terms that were not the subject of consensus such as "sexual orientation and gender identity". By doing so, it had hoped to reach a consensus-based text accepted by all delegations and to remove terms that did not have a widely accepted legal or scientific meaning and that ignored the specific situation of certain countries, including Senegal. Senegal interpreted the concept of gender and all related concepts as referring only to the social relationship between men and women, in line with its national legislation. Several requests had been made to the facilitator of the draft resolution to open up the text and to avoid exclusive lists that divided Member States more than they mobilized them towards essential action.

78. **Mr. Wang Zixu** (China) said that his delegation opposed the use of the term "human rights defender" in the draft resolution, as the term had no legal definition that was recognized by all countries. Views differed as to who could be considered a human rights defender. China was opposed to the inclusion in the draft resolution of any term that did not enjoy consensus within the United Nations.

79. The facilitator of the draft resolution had insisted on using non-consensus-based language at multiple points in the draft resolution, ignoring reasonable proposals made by China and other countries. Regrettably, the facilitator had conducted consultations in an undemocratic manner, which ran counter to the purpose of the draft resolution. His delegation called on the facilitator to be democratic, inclusive and transparent in facilitating future consultations so as to help to forge a consensus. His delegation had abstained from voting on the draft resolution and wished to disassociate itself from the term "human rights defenders".

80. *Mr. Grünwald (Slovakia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

81. **Ms. Santa Ana Vara** (Mexico) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution and believed that the support of the United Nations in the promotion of democratization and enhancing periodic and genuine elections was invaluable. In a democracy, which was the most effective form of government for ensuring that all persons could live in harmony, the participation of all citizens helped to bring about changes. Her delegation therefore welcomed the explicit reference in the draft resolution to those sectors of the population that faced discrimination, including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination,

during electoral processes, so as to promote the adoption of measures to avoid such discrimination. Her delegation appreciated references to the connection between free and fair elections, freedom of expression and media freedom and independence as cornerstones of democracy. It also welcomed the recognition that women and girls undertook a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, which affected their full, effective, equal and meaningful participation and decision-making in public life, and paragraph 12, which called for action to be taken to address that situation.

82. **Ms. Jiménez de la Hoz** (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the focus in the draft resolution on the connection between safeguarding democracy and the protection of freedom of expression was important. The interdependent and mutually reinforcing values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights formed the foundation of the work of the European Union on democracy. The European Democracy Action Plan aimed to empower citizens and create more resilient democracies by promoting free and fair elections, strengthening media freedom and countering disinformation.

83. The draft resolution shed light on emerging challenges to democracy, such as increasing threats to freedom of expression and media freedom worldwide, including attacks against and the harassment and illegal detention of journalists and media workers, and the spread of disinformation on social media. The European Union and its member States looked forward to the development of the United Nations voluntary code of conduct for information integrity on digital platforms.

84. The text incorporated lessons learned from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and recognized that unpaid care and domestic work had a disproportionate impact on the full, effective, equal and meaningful participation and decision-making of women and girls in public life. There was a clear demand for the work of the United Nations, including the United Nations Democracy Fund, in promoting democratization and strengthening periodic and genuine elections, since, between 2021 and 2023, the Organization, either at the request of the country concerned or in line with a Security Council mandate, had provided technical assistance and capacity-building and promoted inclusive electoral processes in more than 60 States and territories. Many Member States contributed through the provision of funding, staff or specialized knowledge and many others benefited from such support.

85. **Ms. Pizarro-viales** (Costa Rica) said that her delegation firmly supported the draft resolution and had voted against amendments that it considered hostile both to the procedure and the substance of the text. Costa Rica welcomed the additions made to the text compared with previous iterations and appreciated that it reaffirmed the need to ensure gender equality as a prerequisite for democracy, as well as the equality of all persons without distinction, particularly those who were marginalized or in vulnerable situations. The principle of leaving no one behind was an integral element of democracy, and no voter should be denied their right to participate in transparent and fair elections on an equal basis and to freely choose their representatives. In the face of discrimination, marginalization or exclusion, Member States must step up efforts to address inequalities. As such, Costa Rica supported paragraph 7 unequivocally and underscored its importance to the text. It was regrettable that amendments had been proposed aiming to weaken the language contained therein, since that would send a dangerous message to all those who had been made vulnerable, excluded or marginalized.

86. **Mr. Ono** (Japan) said that none of the proposed amendments to the draft resolution had been in line with the purpose of the draft resolution, which focused on the protection of media freedom in elections, and did not reflect the discussions held during informal meetings on the text. The Russian amendment had disregarded the importance of the media in supporting genuine elections and had unduly weakened the meaning of the text. The three amendments introduced by Egypt had sought to amend agreed language on points that were unrelated to the new additions that had been made to the text. His delegation had therefore voted against the amendments and welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution.

87. **Ms. Tambwe** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that, although her country acknowledged the crucial role that free elections played in promoting democracy and supported the aim of the draft resolution, it regretted the inclusion of terms that did not enjoy consensus within the United Nations. The promotion of sexual orientation and gender identity was a tool to advance a highly controversial agenda that disregarded the national laws, values and customs of many Member States. Cognizant of the importance of free elections, her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution as a whole but could not accept, and wished to disassociate itself from, the use of the terms “sexual orientation and gender identity” and “women in all their diversity”.

88. **Mr. Mogyorósi** (Hungary) said that, given its commitment to protecting and promoting democratization, the rule of law and genuine elections,

his country had voted in favour of the draft resolution. With regard to the tenth preambular paragraph, his delegation interpreted the term “diversity” as having meaning only in cultural, religious and linguistic contexts and opposed any other interpretation of the term.

89. **Mr. Welles** (Federated States of Micronesia) said that the Constitution of Micronesia guaranteed the protection of the rights of all citizens. There was a need to promote the rights of marginalized and underrepresented groups, such as women, girls and persons with disabilities, in political participation and voting, as reaffirmed in the draft resolution. His delegation wholeheartedly supported the reference in the draft resolution to the connection between freedom of expression and media freedom during all stages of elections. It was pleased that previously agreed language had been retained in the text, including important paragraphs concerning marginalized groups, and his delegation strongly supported paragraph 7. Micronesia believed that every voter had the right to participate in free and fair elections without discrimination based on their background and identity. It would send a dangerous message to all vulnerable groups if the General Assembly were to disregard the marginalization or vulnerable situation of any group mentioned in the text. His delegation was disappointed that certain amendments had been proposed in an attempt to weaken such language and was relieved that they had not been adopted.

90. **Ms. Rajandran** (Singapore) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution in recognition of the importance of fair, periodic and genuine elections for effective, transparent and accountable governance.

91. However, her delegation wished to express its reservations concerning the continued use in the tenth preambular paragraph of the phrase “in all their diversity”, which had no agreed definition and regarding which there was no consensus, as illustrated by the number of delegations that had voted in favour of the amendment to delete the reference. The continued use of unclear terminology would only distract from the objective of working towards the full public participation of all citizens.

92. Her delegation also wished to express its reservations concerning the list contained in paragraph 7, which continued to unnecessarily include categories that were contentious for many delegations based on their national contexts and laws. It was regrettable that more comprehensive and consensus-based language continued to be omitted from the text.

93. With reference to paragraph 10, she noted that, under Singaporean law, persons with disabilities could, upon request, be assisted during voting only by a presiding officer, who must mark the ballot paper in the manner directed by the voter and was under oath to keep all votes secret.

94. **Ms. Mozgovaya** (Belarus) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the text because it recognized the importance of its subject and shared its principles and lofty goals. However, her delegation wished to disassociate itself from the tenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 7, which retained language that did not enjoy universal support from Member States. The firm and consistent position of Belarus was that only agreed language should be used in United Nations documents, in order to maintain the fragile balance of interests of all delegations and achieve a consensus on important issues such as those addressed in the draft resolution. The results of voting on the proposed amendments to the text had made it clear that there was no consensus on gender-related issues. Imposing a certain gender ideology on delegations was divisive.

95. **Ms. Asaju** (Nigeria) said that her delegation recognized the importance of the draft resolution and remained unwavering in its commitment to promoting and upholding processes of governance that were firmly anchored on democratic principles and the rule of law and to ensuring inclusive electoral processes without discrimination. However, it was deeply concerning that some Member States had attempted to introduce in the draft resolution the concepts of “sexual orientation” and “gender identity”, which were neither universally accepted nor legally accurate under international law. Such attempts weakened consensus and made a mockery of collective efforts to strengthen democratization processes. Her delegation had voted in favour of all amendments and wished to disassociate itself from paragraph 7 of the draft resolution.

96. **Ms. Bujanja** (Montenegro) said that her country was committed to democratic principles and firmly believed in the universality of democratic values as articulated in the free will of the people and their full participation in public affairs through free and fair elections. Montenegro recognized the crucial role played by the Electoral Assistance Division in assisting democracies and countries undergoing democratization to establish fair and sustainable national electoral systems. Her country was also committed to the inclusion and full participation of all citizens in political processes. It endorsed the emphasis placed in the draft resolution on including all women and girls in election processes, promoting gender-responsive political institutions and creating more inclusive societies.

97. **Mr. Dabesa** (Ethiopia) said that his country promoted democracy and upheld free, fair and periodic elections, as recognized in its Constitution. His delegation regretted that, despite the persistent objection of numerous delegations, the term “sexual orientation and gender identity” had been included in paragraph 7. His delegation wished to disassociate itself from the term, which had no international consensus or widely accepted legal meaning due to its inherent ambiguity and subjective nature.

98. Similarly, his delegation wished to distance itself from the term “in all their diversity”, which was also ambiguous and susceptible to interpretation. His delegation would not endorse any interpretation of the term that encompassed concepts not recognized in his country’s national laws and policies.

99. **Ms. Al-mashehari** (Yemen) said that her country had voted in favour of the draft resolution due to its commitment to democracy. However, it regretted that the amendments, which had proposed agreed language, had not been adopted. The terms “women in all their diversity” and “sexual orientation and gender identity” had prevented a number of delegations from supporting the draft resolution, thus preventing a consensus. Her delegation wished to disassociate itself from the terms “women in all their diversity” and “sexual orientation and gender identity” as they were not based on a consensus. Such terms were not in keeping with her country’s national laws, culture or religion, and her delegation’s vote in favour of the draft resolution did not constitute acceptance of that language.

100. **Ms. Rios Balbino** (Brazil) said that protecting the integrity of electoral processes, ensuring a free and independent media, combating misinformation and disinformation and protecting the right to freedom of expression were key to the promotion of democratic values and ensuring transparent, free and fair electoral processes. The draft resolution addressed the paramount link between democracy and the prevention and elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

101. The draft resolution retained reference to key issues such as the elimination of discrimination in all its forms and ensuring equal participation. As pointed out by the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, cases of such violence and discrimination remained high and concerning. Recognizing women in all their diversity and including reference to sexual orientation and gender identity ensured that the principle of equality was applied in the

draft resolution and helped to combat all forms of discrimination.

102. **Ms. Andújar** (Dominican Republic) said that her delegation firmly supported the draft resolution and recognized that democracy was a fundamental pillar of any society. It was important to ensure transparent and fair electoral processes. The Dominican Republic was committed to democratic principles, equality of rights, inclusiveness, the creation of an environment for sustainable development and peace and to promoting democratic processes around the world. Genuine elections were not a symbolic gesture but rather the foundation on which stable nations were built, empowering citizens and ensuring that their voices were heard and that their decisions were respected.

103. All citizens had the fundamental right to participate meaningfully in democratic processes, regardless of colour, ethnic origin, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, political position or disability. Inclusion was not an objective but a fundamental requisite for a genuine democracy. The draft resolution addressed vital emerging challenges, such as disinformation and hate speech.

104. In strengthening the role of the United Nations in the promotion of democratization, it was important to protect freedom of expression, media freedom and the safety of journalists, which helped to preserve the integrity of elections. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women and young people was essential in promoting democratization, improving periodic and genuine elections and strengthening the diversity of voices in decision-making and political processes and would require breaking down barriers to participation in public life.

105. **Mr. Mahamadou Seydou** (Niger) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution. However, it had supported the proposed amendments and wished to disassociate itself from the expression “women in all their diversity”. It also wished to disassociate itself from the term “sexual orientation and gender identity”, since the concept had not been codified under international law, and neither treaty law nor international customary law required States to grant advantages or different forms of protection to individuals on the basis of self-determined sexual differences. His delegation wished to extend the same reservations to all resolutions containing such terms.

106. **Ms. Gbai** (Liberia) said that her delegation strongly supported the minor additions made to the draft resolution compared to the previous version (General Assembly resolution [76/176](#)) to focus the text on the nexus between freedom of expression and media

freedom during all stages of elections. Her delegation was also pleased that previously agreed language remained in the text, including important paragraphs regarding persons belonging to marginalized groups, who were more likely to be denied their right to vote and to fair elections and who were more often victims of discriminatory acts carried out with impunity by government authorities. Her delegation strongly supported paragraph 7, which underscored that important topic. No voter should be denied the ability to freely choose their representatives through free and fair elections because of who they were. It would send a dangerous message to all vulnerable people mentioned in the text if the General Assembly were to decide that their marginalization or vulnerable situation did not warrant attention. Her delegation was disappointed that amendments had been proposed in an attempt to weaken such language and was grateful that they had not been adopted.

107. **Mr. Reichwein** (Kingdom of the Netherlands) said that the adoption of the draft resolution, despite a vote having been requested for political reasons, was welcome. The Kingdom of the Netherlands fully supported the objective of the resolution. If the proposed amendments had been successful, the draft resolution would have ignored those that needed protection the most, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. The draft resolution was not a theoretical exercise, and references to those persons reflected the reality of the violence and discrimination they faced in participating in political processes because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Despite a number of statements to the contrary, United Nations human rights treaty bodies had consistently reaffirmed that international human rights law applied equally to all persons and that all persons should be protected from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity under international human rights law. His delegation therefore welcomed the fact that the draft resolution reaffirmed that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons could not and should not be discriminated against.

108. **Mr. Hassani** (Algeria) said that the Constitution of Algeria guaranteed individual and collective rights and freedoms, protected the principle of the people's will, conferred legitimacy on the exercise of power and established periodic, free and regular elections. Algeria had sponsored the resolution in previous sessions because of its deep interest in the spirit and letter of the text. However, since the seventy-sixth session, the text had begun to focus on concepts that were not internationally agreed and were not in line with the cultural and social values of Algeria. His delegation

therefore wished to disassociate itself from the tenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 7, as they contained controversial terms that had not been agreed upon. However, owing to its belief in democratic values and the fact that the essence and objective of the draft resolution were a common denominator for Member States, his delegation had voted in favour of the text as a whole.

109. **Ms. Freudenreich** (France) said that the right to freedom of expression implied the right to search for, receive and share information and ideas through any means. It was therefore essential to protect and promote a free, independent and pluralistic media, particularly during elections. In that regard, it was important that the draft resolution recognized the crucial role of journalists, who should not be prevented from doing their work or subjected to threats or violence.

110. France was opposed to discrimination of any kind, including on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. All persons must be granted the same protection and opportunities, in line with international human rights law. The draft resolution aimed to recall that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, like all others, must be able to participate in democratic life and electoral processes without being subjected to discrimination. It was unacceptable that someone should be excluded from democratic life due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, and no one should be left behind.

111. **Ms. Gurhan** (Uganda) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, because of the great importance of strengthening international cooperation in the conduct of democratic, periodic and genuine elections. However, her delegation wished to disassociate itself from the tenth preambular paragraphs and paragraph 7, as they included the terms "women in all their diversity" and "sexual orientation and gender identity", which were not in line with the religious, social and cultural values of Uganda. Her delegation strongly opposed those contentious terms, which were subjective, were not internationally agreed upon and did not align with her country's national legislation.

112. **Ms. Idres** (Sudan) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution as it concurred with the noble causes and essential values highlighted and recognized therein. The Sudan was committed to upholding democratic values, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis between women and men. Mindful that there was no single model for democracy and of the need for full respect for sovereignty, national laws and social and cultural values, the Sudan had voted in favour of the

three amendments introduced by Egypt. Her delegation wished to disassociate itself from the controversial and non-consensus-based terms “in all their diversity” and “sexual orientation and gender identity”, which had been included in the draft resolution despite calls for their deletion.

113. **Ms. Qureshi** (Pakistan) said that free and fair elections were the cornerstone of democratic processes and her country’s general elections would be held in February 2024. While her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, it wished to disassociate itself from the tenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 7, which continued to contain non-consensus-based and controversial terms that were not recognized under international law or the domestic laws of Pakistan.

114. **Ms. Rizk** (Egypt) said that her country was committed to the centrality of free, fair and inclusive elections as a way to ensure democratic governance and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all without discrimination. That principle was enshrined in her country’s Constitution and reflected in its programmes and policies aimed at ensuring wider participation in political and election processes, particularly by women, youth and persons with disabilities.

115. The right to freedom of expression was key in the context of elections but was not absolute. It carried with it special duties and responsibilities and could therefore be subject to certain restrictions, as provided by law, as stipulated in articles 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The draft resolution as adopted lacked balance in that regard.

116. The principle of non-discrimination was guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law and was reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals on social, economic and political inclusion. The principle of non-discrimination should remain absolute, without fragmentation.

117. It was regrettable that an important draft resolution had been put to a vote. The insistence of the penholder on including contentious references, despite numerous requests to delete them during the informal consultations, had jeopardized the consensus on the draft resolution and, at the expense of promoting the objective of the draft resolution, had favoured the imposition of vague concepts that did not enjoy consensus among Member States and had no basis in international law. Her delegation had therefore abstained from voting.

118. The amendments presented had been aimed at ensuring consensus on the draft resolution and, despite the results of the voting, represented a persistent objection to the imposition of undefined terms in contravention of democratic values. Her delegation appealed to the penholder to reconsider its position and to ensure a consensus on the resolution in the future. Her delegation wished to disassociate itself from the tenth and twelfth preambular paragraphs and paragraph 7.

119. **Mr. Hamed** (Libya) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution owing to the importance of democratic principles and universal participation in electoral and political processes. However, his delegation wished to disassociate itself from the tenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 7, as they contained non-consensus-based expressions such as “sexual orientation and gender identity” which did not enjoy the support of all Member States. Such expressions were not recognized in the national laws of many countries and did not align with the cultural, religious and social principles or national sovereignty of Libya.

120. **Ms. González** (Argentina) said that her delegation appreciated the inclusive, human rights-based and gender-sensitive approach of the draft resolution. It was necessary to guarantee the rights of all citizens, especially those who were marginalized, vulnerable or underrepresented in political participation and voting, including women in all their diversity and LGBTIQ+ persons, so as to allow for gender mainstreaming in political institutions and the creation of more inclusive societies. Her delegation commended the inclusion of language on freedom of expression in the context of electoral processes. The draft resolution contributed to strengthening the universality of human rights, implementation of the 2030 Agenda and fulfilment of its promise to leave no one behind.

121. **Mr. Passmoor** (South Africa) said that his country was committed to the principle of non-discrimination, particularly with regard to participation in elections and sexual orientation and gender identity. That principle was enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa, and his delegation believed that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons should always be accorded their full democratic rights of participation. His delegation had therefore voted against amendments that sought to remove that important language.

122. In the past, the resolution had always carefully balanced support for electoral processes with respect for the principle of non-interference. The decision to keep relevant language intact retained that concept. However, South Africa was concerned that language that had been

added to the draft resolution required further clarification and did not satisfactorily convey the fundamental value of accurate information to an open and transparent electoral process, which was vital to ensure that participation in elections was fair and equal, with a broad spectrum of societal engagement built on well-informed public participation.

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

124. **Mr. Altarsha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, during the debate, not a single delegation had spoken against democratic elections. The foundation provided by that agreement among Member States was important, since things built on weak foundations would always fall. The main sponsors of the draft resolution had isolated themselves in their approach to the draft resolution. They had ignored written comments submitted by certain Member States, without even mentioning them in the text. Such action was uncommon but expected from the main sponsors.

125. The fact that a vote had been called on the draft resolution had been a shock to some delegations, but his delegation believed that it was a normal consequence of the practices witnessed during the negotiations on the text. If the main sponsors of the draft resolution continued to follow the road they were on, they would continue to reach the same conclusion. The request for a vote had been a kind reminder that, within the Third Committee, all Member States were equal and, if the concerns of all delegations were not taken on board, no one would survive.

126. **Monsignor Murphy** (Observer for the Holy See) said that genuine elections permitted citizens to freely express their ideas and opinions, and the Holy See appreciated the inclusion in the draft resolution of language on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, as an enabler of genuine elections. Online communication tools could aid citizens in exercising of their rights, helping to expand political participation.

127. However, his delegation regretted that, despite calls from a number of delegations, most of the text had not been open for negotiation. Working from a revised text without having access to a compilation had hindered the transparency of the process and prevented delegations from adequately assessing and engaging with each other's proposals. That process had also meant that language that was well known to be contentious had been preserved unaltered, despite numerous delegations having raised their concerns and submitted proposals.

128. It was therefore regrettable that the text included ambiguous and contentious terminology related to

diversity and marginalization. The reference to "adolescent girls" in the twenty-first preambular paragraph blurred the line between childhood and adulthood, disregarding the different rights and protections to which each were entitled.

129. His delegation also regretted the retention of reference to "sexual orientation and gender identity". While firmly condemning all forms of unjust discrimination and reaffirming the equal dignity of every human person, the Holy See stressed that the concepts of "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" lacked definitions under international law and did not enjoy consensus. His delegation understood that sexual orientation was not independent from personal sexual identity. It was profoundly regrettable that the retention of such language without the possibility of further discussion had prevented the achievement of consensus on the text.

130. In conformity with its nature and particular mission, the Holy See understood the term "gender" to be grounded in biological sexual identity and difference, namely, male or female.

Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.57: United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region

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

132. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar), introducing the draft resolution, said that the draft resolution was part of efforts to advance the promotion and protection of human rights since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 60/153, as complemented by the official opening of the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region in Doha in 2009. The draft resolution recognized the noticeable progress made in the promotion of human rights and advocacy in the region, including in countries in situations of conflict and post-conflict. It also welcomed the Centre's plan to pursue its human rights capacity-building activities with a focus on youth, and to further develop its training programmes for national human rights institutions and civil society organizations in several areas of human rights. Given the important role played by the Centre since its establishment, as reflected in the relevant report of the Secretary-General, her delegation called on Member States to support the draft resolution.

133. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Canada, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti,

Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Guinea, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

134. He then noted that the following delegations also wished to become sponsors: Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Ukraine.

135. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.57.*

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine,

United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Iran (Islamic Republic of), Syrian Arab Republic.

136. *Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.57 was adopted by 174 votes to none, with 2 abstentions.*

Agenda item 107: Crime prevention and criminal justice (continued) (A/C.3/78/L.12/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.12/Rev.1: Improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons

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

138. **Mr. Pilipenko** (Belarus), introducing the draft resolution, said that the year 2023 marked the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, which formed the legal basis for international efforts to combat trafficking in persons. That anniversary offered an opportunity to evaluate the progress made, identify trends and outline additional national and international efforts, as reflected in the draft resolution. The text had been significantly updated, with a greater focus on the use of information and communications technologies both by the perpetrators of trafficking in persons and by those combating such crimes. Emphasis had also been placed on trafficking in persons in supply chains and in sport, and on the expansion of discussions of trafficking in persons in the contexts of armed conflict, humanitarian situations and migration.

139. In addition, the draft resolution took note of trends that had emerged during the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The text also contained updated information on the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, while also proposing that various United Nations agencies update their own recommendations and tools for combating trafficking in persons, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources. All delegations should support the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus.

140. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the following delegations had become sponsors

of the draft resolution: Algeria, Bahamas, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Costa Rica, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Tajikistan, Thailand and Turkmenistan.

141. He then noted that the following delegations also wished to become sponsors: Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Malawi and Niger.

142. *Draft resolution A/C.3/78/L.12/Rev.1 was adopted.*

143. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations, said that the Group strongly condemned trafficking in persons, particularly of women and children, which constituted both an offence and a serious threat to human dignity, physical integrity, human rights and sustainable development. Trafficking in persons, which remained one of the most prevalent criminal activities in the world, could be effectively combated only through effective cooperation and collaboration. The Group was deeply concerned by global trends, including a decreasing number of victims detected; rising impunity, resulting in more victims being trafficked to more destinations; and increased violence against women and children at the hands of traffickers.

144. In the light of the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, the Group called on all Member States to redouble their efforts to combat trafficking in persons. UNODC played a leading role in combating trafficking in persons, including by providing technical assistance to Member States. The work of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons was also key to improving coordination among United Nations agencies and other relevant organizations with a view to facilitating a holistic and comprehensive approach to preventing and combating trafficking in persons, including protection and support for victims. The Group remained firmly committed to implementing the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and to eradicating the heinous crime of trafficking in persons.

145. **Ms. Alonso Giganto** (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that combating trafficking in persons was a key priority for the European Union and its member States, as reflected in legal and policy measures and a strategy that ranged from prevention to protection of victims and the prosecution and conviction of traffickers. The role of the European Union

Anti-Trafficking Coordinator was key to improving coordination among the relevant institutions, agencies and member States and to developing policies. The international response to trafficking required a human rights-based and victim- and survivor-centred approach. The European Union and its member States remained committed to using a range of foreign policy instruments and cooperation to combat trafficking. Compliance with obligations under the relevant legally binding United Nations instruments was critical, as was implementing General Assembly resolutions on the trafficking of persons.

146. War had returned to the European continent since the draft resolution had last been presented in 2021. The facilitator of the draft resolution, Belarus, continued to support Russia in its war of aggression against Ukraine, and had been instrumentalizing migrants from third countries for its political purposes since 2021. It also had a record of committing serious human rights violations against its own citizens, which tainted its credibility in facilitating the draft resolution. For those reasons, the European Union had decided not to engage in negotiations on the draft resolution or to sponsor the text at the current session. Notwithstanding the above, the European Union and its member States were unequivocal in their strong commitment to combating trafficking in persons.

147. **Ms. Skoczek** (Poland) said that her country was committed to combating human trafficking as a matter of priority, to promoting a human rights-based approach and to protecting, supporting and empowering victims, especially those in vulnerable situations. Although two years had passed since the previous iteration of the draft resolution had been discussed, the Belarusian authorities had failed to draw any conclusions, and continued to take actions designed solely to destabilize the security situation in Central and Eastern Europe and further instrumentalize migration, on an unprecedented scale.

148. Belarusian services were involved in the smuggling of dozens of people across the Polish-Belarusian border on a daily basis. Declarations by that country regarding the need to combat systemic human trafficking were therefore highly hypocritical. In 2021, Polish border services had registered a record 40,000 illegal crossing attempts at the border with Belarus. In 2022, mainly thanks to the efforts of Poland and other European Union countries, that number had dropped to approximately 15,000. However, during the first 10 months of 2023, over 23,000 people had attempted to cross into Poland from Belarus, which would have been impossible without the support of the Belarusian authorities. Organizing an unnatural migration route

through Belarus and pushing people to break the law created dangers for migrants. At the end of August 2023, following the complete closure of the border between Poland and Belarus, the number of migrants attempting to cross the border had fallen to almost zero; however, recent weeks had seen a return to regular practices and an increase in migrants near the Polish border. Her delegation called on Belarus to do justice to its own draft resolution and to stop using innocent people for its malevolent political games.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.