



General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

48th plenary meeting
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New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 3 (continued)

Credentials of representatives to the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly

(b) Report of the Credentials Committee (A/78/605)

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution entitled “Credentials of representatives to the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly”, recommended by the Credentials Committee.

I now give the floor to the Chair of the Credentials Committee, Mrs. Jane Mugafalu Kabui Waetara of Solomon Islands.

Mrs. Waetara (Solomon Islands): On behalf of the Credentials Committee, I have the honour to introduce the report of the Credentials Committee concerning the credentials of the representatives to the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, contained in document A/78/605.

The Committee had before it two communications, respectively concerning the representation of Myanmar and the representation of Afghanistan to the seventy-eighth session. The Committee decided to postpone its consideration of the credentials pertaining to the representatives of Myanmar and of Afghanistan to the seventy-eighth session and to revert to consideration of those credentials at a future time in the seventy-eighth session.

Having considered the credentials of representatives of other Member States to the seventy-eighth session at its meeting on 6 December, the Credentials Committee adopted without a vote a resolution accepting those credentials. The Committee also recommended to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution entitled “Credentials of representatives to the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly”, which is contained in paragraph 14 of the report.

I would like to note that since the day of the meeting of the Credentials Committee, formal credentials in the form required by rule 27 of the rules of procedure were received regarding Suriname.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Committee and to the Secretariat for facilitating our work.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution entitled “Credentials of representatives to the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly”, recommended by the Credentials Committee in its report (A/78/605).

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

*The draft resolution was adopted
(resolution 78/124).*

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position after adoption, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room AB-0928 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Ghadirkhomi (Islamic Republic of Iran): We welcome the work of the Credentials Committee and extend our gratitude to its Chair for the submission of its report (A/78/605).

My delegation joined the consensus on the adoption of resolution 78/124. However, I would like to express my delegation's reservation about the part of the report and of the resolution that could be construed as a recognition of the Israeli regime.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position on resolution 78/124.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 3.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Draft resolutions (A/78/L.27 and A/78/L.29)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bhutan to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.27.

Mr. Nidup (Bhutan): I have the honour and privilege to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.27, entitled "Graduation of Bhutan from the least developed country category", under agenda item 9, on behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China.

The draft resolution is an expression of Bhutan's commitment to graduating from the category of the United Nations least developed country on 13 December, and takes note of the decision of the Royal Government of Bhutan to integrate its smooth transition strategy into its thirteenth national development plan.

The draft resolution expresses concern over the negative impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on Bhutan's socio-economic development and highlights its continued vulnerability to economic shocks, climate change and disasters.

The draft resolution emphasizes the importance of a sustainable and irreversible transition and invites the international community, including bilateral, regional and multilateral partners, to support Bhutan's national development plans through the extension of aid measures, especially in trade, in line with the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries.

The draft resolution further calls for support in areas such as strengthening macroeconomic stability, economic diversification, environmental conservation, innovative financing, and readiness for future pandemics and disasters in Bhutan.

Given the significance of this occasion for my country, allow me, in my national capacity, to make the following remarks:

The adoption of this draft resolution today will be a milestone for Bhutan — a momentous occasion as we stand on the threshold of a significant transition. It has been 53 years since Bhutan was inducted into the least developed country category in 1971. Since then, Bhutan has traversed an extraordinary path of socioeconomic development, led by our visionary monarchs, and today we are proud and stand ready to graduate.

This achievement would not have been possible without the unwavering support and solidarity of our development partners and donors, both bilateral and multilateral. Their steadfast commitment has been crucial in shaping our growth from a budget outlay of a mere 174 million ngultrum for our first Five-Year Plan in the early 1960s to a robust 512 billion ngultrum for the ambitious thirteenth Five-Year Plan, spanning from 2023 to 2028. That staggering growth stands as a testament to the collective efforts and dedication invested in Bhutan's progress.

We express our gratitude to India, Japan, the European Union, the United Nations system and all our partners for their steadfast support throughout our journey, which has greatly aided Bhutan in the pursuit of gross national happiness, our development goal.

In our view, the graduation should not just be a triumph for Bhutan, but should symbolize the collective spirit and determination of nations striving for advancement. It stands as a beacon of hope, demonstrating that when we are united in purpose, incredible strides can be made despite global challenges. As we step into this new phase, we look forward to renewed and innovative forms of support and collaboration with all our partners towards fulfilling our national aspirations and contributing towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all delegations for their active engagement, flexibility and contribution to strengthening the draft resolution and achieving consensus. I would like to thank Cuba, the Chair of the

G-77 and China, and members of the Group for their support and solidarity.

It would be remiss of me not to express our appreciation to the delegation of Nepal for facilitating the draft resolution and to the secretariat of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of the President of the General Assembly for their assistance and support.

Finally, our sincere gratitude goes to all the delegations that have sponsored the draft resolution and for joining us in celebrating our collective achievement!

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Angola to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.29.

Mr. Da Cruz (Angola): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.29, entitled “Deferral of the graduation of Angola from the least developed country (LDC) category to a later date”.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Group of 77 and China for its unconditional support and solidarity, and express my gratitude to Ms. Pramita Adhikari of the Permanent Mission of Nepal for facilitating the process as well as the Member States for their constructive engagement during the informal consultations.

The Republic of Angola was scheduled to graduate in February 2024. But unfortunately it will no longer be able to reach that important milestone due to multiple shocks, including the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic, unstable oil prices on the international market, serious droughts, food price increases and currency devaluation. The gross national income per capita fell below the graduation criteria.

Economic and Social Council resolution 2023/10 recommends that the General Assembly defer Angola’s graduation to a later date to enable the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) to further consider the country’s economic situation and its smooth transition strategy. In that connection, after the presentation of the Committee for Development Policy report (E/2023/33), the Angolan Government activated paragraph 284 of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and engaged in consultations through the enhanced mechanism with the CDP of the United

Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Following consultations, the Government of Angola and the CDP agreed to withdraw the country from the graduation process, taking into account the current social economic challenges that have disrupted its development progress.

Angola reiterates its commitment to the graduation process from LDC status because that is an important step for the country’s sustainable development strategy, which has adopted the national development programme 2023-2027 as a medium-term planning instrument to implement the long-term Angola 2050 strategy. Both strategies are fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the African Union Agenda 2063 and the Doha Programme of Action.

Finally, I would like to request Member States to join consensus for the adoption of this important draft resolution for Angola.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/78/L.27 and A/78/L.29.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in document A/78/L.27, the following countries have become co-sponsors: Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Türkiye, Tuvalu and Ukraine.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.27, entitled “Graduation of Bhutan from the least developed country category”.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.27?

Draft resolution A/78/L.27 was adopted (resolution 78/125).

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.29, entitled “Deferral of the graduation of Angola from the least developed country category to a later date”.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.29?

Draft resolution A/78/L.29 was adopted (resolution 78/126).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 9.

Agenda item 13 (continued)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Draft resolution (A/78/L.28)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.28.

Mr. Rakhmetullin (Kazakhstan): It is my great privilege to introduce, on behalf of the core group members — namely, Armenia, Bolivia, Germany, Kazakhstan, Kenya and Kiribati — as well as other co-sponsors, the draft resolution entitled “International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development, 2026”, contained in document A/78/L.28.

The draft resolution before the General Assembly seeks to designate 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development. The International Year of Volunteers in 2001 and its tenth anniversary in 2011 contributed significantly to making volunteerism an important component of national and regional development strategies. Since then, volunteerism has evolved into a natural component of joint international efforts to adhere to rapid changes in our societies and economies, with more people volunteering in innovative ways than ever before.

The International Year gives Member States a renewed opportunity to raise awareness of volunteerism on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first United Nations International Year devoted to volunteers, to increase their role, involvement and capacity, and to strengthen the connection between volunteering and the Sustainable Development Goals. If proclaimed, the International Year will unite all relevant stakeholders in a year-long effort to integrate volunteering into the development agenda more effectively. Furthermore, it will have a positive effect after 2026, addressing contemporary and emerging challenges in accelerating

and attaining progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and beyond. It will also address the contemporary and emerging challenges that new models of volunteerism are facing.

The draft resolution has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines for the proclamation of international years, adopted under decision 35/424 upon a proposal by Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67.

The document reaffirms relevant United Nations documents that recognize volunteers as an important tool for advancing sustainable development, and contains references to the relevant United Nations resolutions on volunteerism. It also provides some recommendations on how Governments, the United Nations system and other stakeholders could support the implementation of the year. United Nations Volunteers will be designated as the focal point to lead and coordinate all activities of the International Year.

The concept note for the draft resolution reflected initial ideas on key objectives and priorities of the Year. As per established practice, specific objectives of the International Year and the programme of activities will be defined through an advisory committee comprised of Member States and United Nations entities.

The draft resolution was agreed in its entirety during the informal consultations, held in a very constructive spirit. We therefore look forward to its adoption by consensus. Let me express our sincere gratitude to all delegations for their productive engagement and constructive input they brought to the drafting process. We thank all the sponsors and invite all Member States that have not already done so, to join the sponsorship list of the resolution. I also want to extend our sincere gratitude to United Nations Volunteers and the Secretariat for their support throughout the process.

Finally, our special word of gratitude goes to the experts in our missions for their work on facilitating the draft resolution.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.28.

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

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed

in document A/78/L.28, the following countries have become co-sponsors: Algeria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Croatia, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan.

The President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.28, entitled “International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development, 2026”.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.28?

Draft resolution A/78/L.28 was adopted (resolution 78/127).

Agenda items 13 and 75 (continued)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Oceans and the law of the sea

(a) Oceans and the law of the sea

Draft resolution (A/78/L.25)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.25.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): France and Costa Rica are very pleased to introduce for adoption today by the General Assembly draft resolution A/78/L.25, on the modalities of the third United Nations Ocean Conference. The draft resolution constitutes our roadmap, setting a horizon — June 2025 — and a framework to begin preparations for the Conference together.

I thank all delegations for their constructive engagement throughout the process. Their contributions resulted in a final result that we can all welcome. The consensus reached during the negotiations demonstrates that the protection of the ocean, and more generally the defence of global common goods, is a unifying theme.

That is proof that we can all come together to define a framework for cooperation on a subject of shared interest, vital to our existence, under the auspices of the United Nations.

The ocean is under too many cumulative pressures. It is affected by increasingly extreme temperatures and climatic phenomena, a decline in its biodiversity and an increase in its pollution. It is urgent that we come together and act as one for the health of the ocean. In response to that emergency, Costa Rica and France have sought to raise the level of ambition for the third United Nations Ocean Conference. It is in that spirit that we submit the draft resolution today. In direct line with the first Conference, co-chaired by Sweden and Fiji, and the second, co-chaired by Kenya and Portugal, the United Nations Conference will be held in Nice and bring the international community together to fully implement the Sustainable Development Goal 14.

We wanted to make the discussions operational and action-oriented. The ten Ocean Action panels, in parallel with the plenary, will allow States and stakeholders in all their diversity to form engagement groups around concrete results. The draft resolution on the modalities of the Conference defines the parameters of the new panels, which will be an essential instrument for achieving our common objectives.

Much remains to be done, in particular to define together the themes that we will address throughout the Conference. We will structure the consultation process in the coming months as transparently and inclusively as possible. France and Costa Rica will also offer three special events on the sidelines of the Conference on science, blue finance and sea level rise.

The third United Nations Ocean Conference, whose general theme is the acceleration of action and the mobilization of all stakeholders, seeks to bring together all multilateral processes relating to the ocean. We are convinced that it will enable great advances in the protection and resilience of the ocean. The adoption of the draft resolution today is only a first step; we will need to amplify collective efforts between now and June 2025 to advance environmental multilateralism linked to the ocean and to make structuring announcements in Nice.

We therefore call for the highest level of ambition so that the Nice ocean action plan, the final document encompassing the political declaration negotiated by the States and the voluntary commitments of

all participants, is commensurate with the state of emergency that the ocean is experiencing.

We are counting on everyone here and the commitment of their countries at the highest level, as well as that of civil society, because the United Nations Ocean Conference will be a collective work.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.25.

In that connection, since draft resolution A/78/L.25 has been circulated only today, it would be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure which reads as follows:

“As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting.”

Unless I hear any objections, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees with my proposal to waive rule 78.

It was so decided.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in document A/78/L.25, the following countries have become co-sponsors: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, North Macedonia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, the Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Ukraine, Vanuatu and Zambia.

The President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.25 entitled “2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.25?

Draft resolution A/78/L.25 was adopted (resolution 78/128).

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

Mr. Dundon (Australia): I make this statement on behalf of Canada, New Zealand and my own country, Australia (CANZ).

At the outset, CANZ would like to express our deep appreciation to France and Costa Rica for their efforts in co-facilitating resolution 78/128. We look forward to continuing that close collaboration as we participate in the preparatory meetings and negotiations and at the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice.

We are pleased to have joined consensus today in adopting the modalities for this process. CANZ would like to reaffirm our commitment to inclusive and transparent approaches to civil society participation at United Nations meetings, as well as stakeholder engagement more broadly. In that regard, we would like to register our strong disappointment that the language in paragraph 16 of annex II does not contain the necessary provisions to ensure the meaningful participation of civil society at the third United Nations Oceans Conference. We note that language safeguarding broad participation, transparency and accountability for the participation of civil society organizations has recently been agreed by consensus. That language has not been replicated here.

In our view, all Member States should be focused on ensuring that the General Assembly holds the final decision-making power on the participation of civil society organizations at United Nations meetings. CANZ regrets that this will not be the case for the third United Nations Ocean Conference, and we urge the membership to support the consensus modalities that protects the inclusion of civil society organizations in future negotiated texts.

Mr. Pickens (United Kingdom): We thank the co-facilitators, Costa Rica and France, for their leadership on the ocean agenda and their work on resolution 78/128.

The world's ocean is in crisis, teetering on a critical tipping point. The upcoming United Nations Ocean Conference in 2025 presents a crucial opportunity to accelerate progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 and other linked SDGs. Our climate, food security and livelihoods depend on healthy oceans.

We have had an historic year for biodiversity and oceans, with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction. It is imperative that we act now to implement them. The United Kingdom reaffirms our commitment to protecting our ocean from unsustainable activities and protecting its unique ecosystems.

We welcome and join consensus on the resolution on the modalities for the United Nations Ocean Conference. However, we would like to highlight a concern that paragraph 16 under annex II, as currently submitted, risks allowing Member States to block the meaningful participation of civil society organizations in the Conference. Decisions about intergovernmental United Nations meetings should reside with the entire General Assembly, and we should not repeat mistakes of the past, when individual Member States have unilaterally and arbitrarily blocked the participation of civil society organizations.

Denying the voices of legitimate partners with invaluable first-hand experience of the challenges affecting oceans and innovative solutions to solve them would be a grave error. We must hear from local communities, indigenous groups, fisherfolk and experts whose knowledge can significantly inform our decisions and ensure that the conference leads to more sustainable and equitable outcomes. To ensure that all relevant voices are heard on that critical topic, let us work together to strengthen civil society participation, upholding the spirit of inclusivity that defines this institution.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 13 and sub-item (a) of agenda item 75.

Agenda item 14

Culture of peace

Draft resolution (A/78/L.26)

The President: Before we proceed to take action on draft resolution A/78/L.26, I should like to inform Members that the Assembly will hold a debate on this item at a later date to be announced.

I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.26.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): On behalf of the Republic of the Philippines and my own delegation, Pakistan, as well as all other sponsors, I have the privilege to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.26, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace", under agenda item 14, "Culture of peace".

The primary purpose of the United Nations is the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. The Charter of the United Nations provides several mechanisms, especially under Chapters VI and VII, to promote that central purpose of the Organization. As outlined in article 3 of the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (resolution 53/243), the realization of such a culture is integrally linked to the central purposes of the United Nations Charter: the peaceful settlement of disputes, the elimination of racial or religious discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; and full recognition of the right to self-determination. Yet, to secure universal peace among and within nations, it is essential to promote a culture of peace — a culture that respects, accepts and accommodates, in policy and practice, the diverse ethnicities, religions and cultures that compose the mosaic of modern States and our globalized international community.

Unfortunately, the challenges to the promotion of a culture of peace have grown in recent times. We are living through wars in Europe and the Middle East that have caused massive human suffering and physical destruction. We are witnessing the rise of hatred based on religion, culture and ethnic differences, resulting in acts of individual and collective violence. We are seeing the re-emergence of fascist and extremist ideologies even in mature democracies, including the phenomena of Islamophobia and other religious intolerance. States are resorting once again to the logic of power to impose their will on weaker nations. The Charter's norms of

self-determination and non-use of force are being brazenly trampled. Meanwhile, terrorism has spread across the continents, destabilizing nations and regions.

Yet it is precisely in such circumstances that the international community must mobilize endeavours to promote a culture of peace. Pakistan and the Philippines have fostered that endeavour through their biennial resolution on a culture of peace. This year, the sponsors have made a conscious effort, by carefully streamlining the text of the draft resolution, to ensure that it focuses on its core purposes, which are, first, to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue to achieve peace and stability; and secondly, to strengthen mechanisms that promise constructive dialogue across the most divergent divides.

As conflicts and violence intensify, the beauty of religious, ethnic and cultural diversity is overshadowed by hatred and intolerance. Diversity is being weaponized as a catalyst for discord rather than for mutual enrichment. That amplifies the mistaken notion of a clash of civilizations, further fuelling and perpetuating hatred, discrimination and organized violence against individuals, communities and nations of different cultures, nationalities, religions or race. Anti-Muslim discrimination, and Islamophobic attitudes in particular, have been misused to instigate discrimination and violence against Muslims.

In that regard, the draft resolution recalls resolution 76/254, adopted the year before last by consensus, to observe 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, and it also welcomes the commemoration of the Day earlier this year in the General Assembly Hall. The draft resolution also reaffirms that violence cannot and should never be a justifiable or acceptable response to acts of intolerance on the basis of religion or belief, and that such violence should not be attributed to any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

We are grateful for the constructive engagement of all delegations and groups and the flexibility they have demonstrated to help in restoring the traditional consensus enjoyed by this important draft resolution. The text of the draft resolution has passed the silence procedure. The sponsors hope and expect that it will be adopted by consensus. That will reinforce the enduring pledge taken by all Member States to foster a culture of peace — a commitment that is critical, in our current circumstances, to saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.26.

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

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in document A/78/L.26, the following countries have become co-sponsors: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, China, Djibouti, Egypt, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Qatar, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Viet Nam.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.26, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.26?

Draft resolution A/78/L.26 was adopted (resolution 78/129).

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

Mr. Breen (United States of America): The United States firmly supports efforts to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation. We thank the Philippines and Pakistan for their initiative in submitting resolution 78/129, on an important topic of key interest to all United Nations delegations. We would like to take this opportunity to clarify our position on the following issues.

The United States strongly supports the freedoms of expression and religion or belief. We oppose any attempts to unduly limit the exercise of those fundamental freedoms. In that context, we continue to have strong reservations about paragraph 15, the text of

which suggests that protections of freedom of expression and religion or belief are at odds with one another. We strongly believe that protecting both freedom of religion and freedom of expression promotes mutual respect and pluralism, and that both of those rights are essential to human dignity and a robust civil society.

We firmly believe that all people should be free to choose and practice their chosen faith or none at all. Freedom of religion plays an important societal role and is crucial to the creation of tolerant and respectful societies. Those two freedoms are mutually reinforcing and both must be respected in order to achieve mutual respect and meaningful interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

The United States firmly believes that the best way to deal with intolerance or hate speech is not to restrict expression, but to promote dialogue. We advocate for robust protections for speech, as well as the enforcement of appropriate legal regimes that deal with discriminatory acts and hate crimes. We remind Member States that, as recognized in the Istanbul process, the open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interfaith and intercultural dialogue at the local, national and international levels, can play a positive role in combating religious hatred and violence. The United States strongly believes that we should work together to build a more secure and peaceful world through the promotion of justice, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

With respect to the twenty-fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 15, the United States notes its reservations to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Nevertheless, we reiterate our appreciation for the efforts of the Philippines and Pakistan in submitting this resolution on interreligious dialogue. The United States remains committed to working with the Member States to promote tolerance and understanding.

Ms. Zabolotskaya (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the delegations of Pakistan and the Philippines for preparing resolution 78/129 on the important issue of promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace.

The Russian Federation, as a multi-ethnic and multiconfessional State, attaches paramount importance to the development of intercultural and interreligious dialogue at both the national and the international

levels. We fully share the opinion that promoting a culture of peace and mutual respect is key to meeting many contemporary challenges. We are convinced that genuine progress towards achieving the goals of the resolution is possible only if the entire range of obstacles is taken into account.

In particular, instances of using the church as an instrument for promoting political doctrines, especially if they are xenophobic and misanthropic in nature, require an objective assessment and immediate response from the world community. In that regard, the international community should not stand idle in the face of legislative initiatives aimed at banning traditional religious faiths; the seizure of the property of religious communities, including churches and monasteries; and State intervention in the affairs of the church, in particular by forcing religious communities to change religious jurisdiction. Such actions are a violation of article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In our opinion, reference to that most important article should have found a place in the resolution.

All of this is not the fruit of theoretical speculation, but the reality of contemporary Ukraine, where on 19 October the Parliament adopted in the first reading bill No. 8371, on amendments to certain laws of Ukraine on the activities of religious organizations in Ukraine. The bill's only aim is a complete ban on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. If the bill is enacted — and the authorities in Ukraine are trying to expedite that procedure — one of the oldest churches, with millions of worshippers, could be destroyed in the territory of Ukraine as early as the beginning of next year.

To replace the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian authorities have artificially created a schismatic structure with an almost identical name. Clergy and believers are forced to accept that new jurisdiction through deception, violence and blackmail. The property of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is forcibly confiscated, including by the State, and transferred to the new structure. The most striking but far from only example in that regard is the seizure of the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra monastery — a symbol of canonical Orthodoxy. In early December, the Monastery of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Cherkasy was unlawfully seized. We invite everyone who wants to learn more about this issue and know the truth simply to search the Internet, where videos clearly show military personnel of the Ukrainian armed forces

beat worshippers and clergy, shouting insults at them as they seized the monastery.

We consider it fundamentally important to draw the attention of delegations present in the Hall today to Ukraine's violations of its obligations under article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which enshrines the right of everyone to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and establishes a ban on coercion to choose a religion. We call on all States, international organizations and religious denominations to influence Kyiv and prevent the adoption of that criminal law, and to encourage the authorities in Ukraine to end the persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, its priests and worshippers.

Mr. Belmont Roldán (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States to explain our position on resolution 78/129.

The European Union is a strong supporter of freedom of religion or belief and actively encourages and supports interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace. We welcome the efforts of the co-facilitators, Pakistan and the Philippines, to streamline and update the resolution this year. However, we continue to regret that the resolution duplicates in many respects the provisions of two other draft resolutions that were adopted recently by the Third Committee and will soon be considered by the General Assembly. The first (A/C.3/78/L.48) is about freedom of religion or belief; the other (A/C.3/78/L.54) is on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief.

The European Union welcomed the co-facilitators' approach to focus this time on rationalization, and it refrained from presenting substantive proposals. With the cooperation of others, the result is a better, more readable text. We intend to continue to cooperate constructively on the resolution in its future iterations with the aim of improving references to the full enjoyment of human rights and safeguarding references to the rights to freedom of expression and opinion and to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, in the face of attempts to curtail or redefine them. We also emphasize that the United Nations must be impartial and avoid singling out a particular religion and focus on a more universal approach.

In that regard, we reiterate our position on the term "Islamophobia". Using that term instead of "anti-Muslim discrimination" or "anti-Muslim hatred" places undue emphasis on the protection of religion as such, thereby undermining the principles of international human rights law, in which the focus is on the protection of people. Indeed, the right to freedom of religion or belief, which includes the right not to believe or to change religion, follows the same principle as all other human rights, in which the State is the bearer of obligations and individuals are the rights-holders.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. That right includes the freedom to practice or adopt the religion or belief of one's choice, as well as the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief, individually and collectively, both in public and in private, through worship, the celebration of rituals, practices and teaching.

As the main sponsor of the annual resolutions on freedom of religion or belief in New York and Geneva, the European Union advocates a comprehensive and universal approach that seeks to eliminate all forms of incitement to discrimination, hostility, violence and intolerance directed against people because of their religion or beliefs, including non-believers. While we thank the co-facilitators for their efforts, we continue to believe that the balance of the text can be further improved.

With those clarifications, the European Union and its member States have today joined the consensus.

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

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

Ms. Tokarska (Ukraine): We were disappointed to see the Russian delegation once again turn the consideration of this important issue into a platform for its lies and propaganda. Russia did the same during informal consultations, and we appreciate the fact that delegations rejected that approach and that the Russian Federation found itself isolated in its attempts.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

Agenda item 125 (continued)

Global health and foreign policy

Draft resolutions (A/78/L.14 and A/78/L.24)

Draft amendments (A/78/L.31 and A/78/L.32)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.14.

Mrs. Lora-Santos (Philippines): On behalf of the Permanent Missions of the Philippines and Hungary, as co-chairs of the Group of Friends in Support of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Health-care Facilities, along with a core group consisting of Colombia, Egypt, Nepal and Poland, I am pleased to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.14, entitled “Sustainable, safe and universal water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services in health-care facilities.”

In 2019, Member States committed, through a World Health Assembly resolution, to meet the target of universal access to water, sanitation, waste management and hygiene services in health-care facilities by 2030. Although some progress has been made since that resolution was adopted, many critical gaps remain. It is deeply concerning that one in five health-care facilities lacks basic water; that one in five has no sanitation; that one in two lacks basic hand hygiene; that one in four does not segregate health-care waste; and furthermore, that 1 billion people access health-care facilities without reliable electricity or without electricity access at all. The situation is most dire in the least developed countries, where, for example, only 21 per cent of health-care facilities have basic sanitation services, whereas the target for 2025 is 80 per cent.

Fully functioning water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH), waste and electricity services are a crucial aspect of preventing infections, reducing anti-microbial resistance, ending preventable maternal and new-born deaths, and responding to outbreaks and emergencies.

The political declarations of the recent health-related high-level meetings approved by our Heads of State recognized the importance of water, sanitation, hygiene, waste management and electricity services in health-care facilities for health promotion, disease prevention

and the safety of patients and health workers alike, and highlighted the need for urgent universal and equitable access to those services as a crucial aspect of pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, as well as the functioning of health-care systems in general. It is crucial to translate that political endorsement into action on the ground. Considering population growth, climate change and urbanization, ensuring those services in health-care facilities is an integral part of delivering across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The draft resolution before us focuses on three main areas where action is urgently needed: first, integrate WASH, waste and electricity services into health planning, programming, financing and monitoring at all levels; secondly, regularly monitor and review progress and strengthen accountability; and thirdly, develop and empower the health-care workforce to deliver and maintain WASH, waste and electricity services and practice good hygiene. With the draft resolution, it is our intention to ensure that the discussions on sustainable, safe and universal WASH, waste and electricity services are integrated into other high-level relevant discussions here at the United Nations, particularly on universal health coverage, anti-microbial resistance and interlinkages across the SDGs, among others.

We wish to thank the World Health Organization teams, both here in New York and Geneva, for the secretariat support they provided Member States on this important issue.

From Geneva, we have brought this important issue here to New York to the attention of the General Assembly in response to a very clear and urgent need for stronger multilateral collaboration to strengthen and consolidate Member State commitments, leadership and investments. We thank those who have already co-sponsored the draft resolution and invite others to likewise register their support and co-sponsor the same in order to facilitate a real and transformative impact on the ground.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.24.

Ms. Carty (United States of America): I am pleased to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.24, entitled “Enhancing action at the national, regional and international levels to address the global public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs”.

The United States introduced the draft resolution to highlight emerging global issues related to synthetic drugs and to urge widespread and unified support to address their associated public health and security challenges. We feel strongly that the draft resolution achieves what we set out to do. The draft resolution aligns with United States efforts to enhance international cooperation on that urgent issue through the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats, launched by Secretary of State Blinken in July, and ongoing efforts in the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND).

The draft resolution relies heavily on agreed language from the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in recognition that the CND is the policymaking body of the United Nations system with prime responsibility for drug-related matters. It is intended to be concise and focused and frames the issue as one impacting the public health and security of all countries. The text presents a balanced approach encompassing public health, human rights and security perspectives.

We feel strongly that the draft resolution should not get ahead of the work done in Vienna and the Third Committee. We urge representatives to keep that in mind today as we consider the adoption of the text, including the amendments that have been presented since submission. The draft resolution sets the stage for strengthened cooperation that can help us save lives, protect our citizens and weaken transnational criminal organizations.

I urge all countries represented in the Hall to support the text. Their support sends a message of global unity and commitment to addressing and countering the public health and safety threats posed by synthetic drugs as part of a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach to addressing and countering all aspects of the world drug problem. A vote in favour of the draft resolution has the potential to have real impact.

To conclude, let me reiterate that the draft resolution sets the stage for strengthened cooperation that can help us save lives, protect the health of our citizens and weaken transnational criminal organizations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico to introduce draft amendments A/78/L.31 and A/78/L.32.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the United States for its efforts to

raise the profile of the challenges derived from the abuse of synthetic drugs. For my country, Mexico, addressing those challenges is a priority. Mexico believes it of paramount importance to protect the health, well-being and security of all, and has therefore identified public policies that are more humane and balanced, with a clear focus on public health and human rights, in order to effectively address the global problem of synthetic drugs.

Our delegation participated actively in the negotiations on draft resolution A/78/L.24 in its determination to contribute to a pioneering document that considers all dimensions of the problem through a global, integrated and balanced approach. In that regard, we note with concern that the draft resolution in its current version makes no mention of resolution 77/238, the sole General Assembly resolution on the global drug problem, entitled “Addressing and countering the world drug problem through a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach”. Resolution 77/238 underscores the importance of holistically addressing a phenomenon that affects all countries through the formulation of more humane and effective drug policies commensurate with the increasingly complex challenges we face, such as those posed by synthetic drugs.

For my country, the failure to reference resolution 77/238 is not acceptable. It is the most recent General Assembly resolution on this matter. To include that reference is to preserve the vision of the majority of the membership on the need for a balanced and comprehensive approach to the formulation and implementation of drug policies that incorporate a public health and human rights-based approach.

To address that concern, Mexico has proposed draft amendment A/78/L.31, whereby a reference to resolution 77/238 would be inserted into the eighth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/78/L.24. Mexico is convinced that a reference to resolution 77/238 would contribute to the formulation of drug policies with a broad-based, integrated, multidisciplinary and balanced approach, which is essential to ensuring the effective implementation of international conventions on drugs.

For those reasons, we respectfully ask all delegations to support the draft amendment. Supporting it would also provide recognition of the importance of maintaining continuity in our work and recognizing the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

(spoke in English)

Should the amendment be put to a vote, we respectfully call on all delegations to support it and vote in its favour.

(spoke in Spanish)

I now turn to the second amendment, contained in document A/78/L.32.

Since the beginning of negotiations on draft resolution A/78/L.24, Mexico, with the support of other delegations, has called for the incorporation of language that would accurately reflect the full supply chain of the drug problem, from their production and trafficking to their distribution in illicit retail markets and their consumption and use. We regret that the reservations expressed by other delegations were not heeded and that our proposal to include a reference to the distribution of drugs in consumer markets was therefore not included in the final text.

The draft resolution in its current state does not appropriately reflect the full supply chain of the world drug problem. It does not recognize the full spectrum of the problem. It is critical to recognize and address all aspects and facets of the issue because, without a balanced approach that takes demand and distribution in consumption markets into account, efforts to address and counter the world drug problem will be incomplete and ultimately ineffective. Without a complete approach, we will be unable to formulate effective, people-centred drug policies.

For all of those reasons, Mexico has proposed an amendment to insert in the first preambular paragraph an explicit reference to distribution in illicit retail markets. It is crucial to recognize that the world drug problem goes beyond the borders of producing and trafficking countries. One major and underestimated issue is the vast distribution networks of consumer markets that set the final retail price and generate enormous income for the illicit economy. That income fosters and maintains the global production and trafficking of drugs to their final destination. That is a critical challenge that must be addressed with the same gravity and commitment that is applied to production and transit. Given the transnational nature of the problem, it is imperative to have a cooperation-based approach that is coordinated among all countries to address both supply and demand in retail markets.

In that regard, Mexico requests the support of all delegations for the proposed amendment, which we believe would significantly strengthen the substance and scope of draft resolution A/78/L.24.

(spoke in English)

Should one or both of the amendments A/78/L.31 or A/78/L.32 be put to a vote, we respectfully call on all delegations to support them and to vote in their favour.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/78/L.14 and A/78/L.24 and draft amendments A/78/L.31 and A/78/L.32.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to address the additional co-sponsorship of all four draft documents under this agenda item.

First, on A/78/L.14, I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in document A/78/L.14, the following countries have become co-sponsors: Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Croatia, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France, Georgia, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Jordan, Malaysia, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Peru, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

Turning to draft resolution A/78/L.24, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in document A/78/L.24, the following countries have become co-sponsors: Afghanistan, Austria, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Israel, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Türkiye

Turning to draft amendment A/78/L.31, I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft amendment, and in addition to the delegations listed in document A/78/L.31, the following countries have become co-sponsors: Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Honduras, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine.

Finally, on A/78/L32, since the submission of the draft amendment, and in addition to the delegations listed in document A/78/L.32, the following countries have become co-sponsors: Colombia and Honduras.

The President: Delegations wishing to make statements in explanation of vote before the voting on any proposal under this item are invited to do so now in one intervention. After action on all of them, there will be an opportunity for explanations of vote after the voting on any and all of them.

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

Ms. Eyrieh (United States of America): I will group all interventions on these various draft amendments and draft resolutions together and highlight by title.

With regard to draft amendment A/78/L.31, which is the proposed amendment to the eighth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/78/L.24, the issue of whether and how to include a reference to resolution 77/238 was extensively discussed during the informal consultations, and we were unable to identify language that could achieve consensus other than the general reference that is already in the text. We recognize that resolution 77/238 is very important to many delegations, and the United States was among the countries voting in favour of the text last year, as well as co-sponsoring. However, we left it out of the table draft of this draft resolution because it was clear that its inclusion would not enjoy consensus. The United States will abstain in the voting on this amendment.

Turning to draft amendment A/78/L.32, which is an amendment to the first preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/78/L.24, the amendment to add the phrase “in illicit retail markets” takes this text in a direction we, as the co-sponsor, have specifically tried to avoid. It introduces a new concept not recognized in the Vienna context, undermining our efforts to respect Vienna’s leading role in international drug policy. Also, this is not a concept addressed in Third Committee resolutions on the world drug problem. Further, it is a legal contradiction. The term “retail” is used in United Nations drug control treaties exclusively to refer to the legitimate distribution of drugs for medical and scientific purposes, in contrast to the term “illicit markets”, which refers to criminal distribution for non-medical and non-scientific purposes. The term

“illicit retail markets” is therefore problematic. This underscores the importance of respecting Vienna’s leading role. By taking this text beyond what the experts in Vienna have discussed, the draft amendment appears to introduce a fundamental legal error into the draft resolution. For that reason, the United States will oppose the amendment and urges other delegations to also vote against draft amendment A/78/L.32.

Turning to the full text in draft resolution A/78/L.24, during informals it was clear that there was broad support for addressing this issue, and we believe that the vote today is based solely on language referencing a separate resolution rather than on substantive disagreement over the current draft resolution itself. We therefore regard the substantive portions of this text as having successfully achieved consensus. We remain hopeful that the draft resolution will be adopted by a wide margin in order to demonstrate widespread recognition that this is an important issue that we need to work together to address. A vote in favour of this text sends a message that your country stands with the United States and the majority of Member States in committing to addressing the public health and safety threats posed by synthetic drugs.

Turning now to draft resolution A/78/L.14, the United States is pleased to join consensus on the draft resolution entitled “Sustainable, safe and universal water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services in health-care facilities”.

In reference to paragraphs 2, 4 and 6, the United States would like to reiterate that the multilateral development banks, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have their own governance structures, mandates and decision-making processes that are independent of the United Nations and are essential to helping ensure that they remain fiscally solvent and able to support the objectives of their shareholders.

Moreover, those institutions’ governing bodies include broad country membership, including recipient and non-recipient members. As such, it is inappropriate and potentially undermines the intended function of those entities for the United Nations to speak to directly influence or to make specific recommendations regarding the multilateral development banks, the OECD and the IMF. In that regard, we reiterate that the proper forums to discuss eligibility measures

for concessional finance and official development assistance are the respective boards of the multilateral development banks themselves and the OECD.

Mr. Kita (Japan): Today, as we stand on the threshold of adopting draft resolution A/78/L.14, on sustainable, safe and universal water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services in health-care facilities, I am honoured to represent Japan. I would like to express our profound gratitude to our colleagues from the Philippines and Hungary, whose dedication as facilitators was instrumental in shaping the draft resolution.

The draft resolution on ensuring sustainable, safe and universal water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services and health-care facilities aligns seamlessly with our unwavering commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Japan, guided by our ethos of human security and inclusivity, strongly believes in the transformative power of universal health coverage and comprehensive health care. Our support for the draft resolution is a reflection of our deep-seated conviction that every individual deserves access to essential health services, irrespective of his or her circumstances.

In that context, I wish to honour Doctor Tetsu Nakamura, who tragically lost his life in Afghanistan on 4 December 2019, four years ago. His dedication to humanitarian work and his efforts in Afghanistan, particularly in building canal projects and transforming arid lands into fertile grounds, exemplified the spirit of the draft resolution. Doctor Nakamura's approach was holistic, addressing the root causes of poor health, such as malnutrition and unsanitary conditions. His work in constructing hospitals and promoting agricultural development was instrumental in creating sustainable communities and strengthening primary health care. As we remember Doctor Nakamura today, let us reaffirm our commitment to the principles he stood for: compassion, resilience and a belief in a better world. His legacy inspires our efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

In conclusion, I am proud to announce that Japan joins Hungary and the Philippines as a co-sponsor of this initiative. We are committed to accelerating our efforts to realize the draft resolution's vision and actively support capacity-building in developing countries. Together, let us honour Doctor Nakamura's memory by working tirelessly towards a world where

no one is left behind and where every individual has access to the highest attainable standard of health.

Ms. Zabolotskaya (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation regrets that the delegation of Mexico decided to propose an amendment to draft resolution A/78/L.24, entitled "Enhancing action at the national, regional and international levels to address the global public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs". Draft amendment A/78/L.31, if adopted, would deprive the draft resolution, on the important topic of drug control, of its consensus status.

The Russian Federation is firmly convinced that only a strong consensus decision on anti-drug issues can ensure the unity of the approaches of the world community to developing an effective response to drug crime. To date, the latest such document remains the high-profile 2021 omnibus resolution 76/188, which reflects the results of many years of negotiations and efforts to harmonize positions. It was precisely that result that the overwhelming majority of delegations, including that of Russia, worked towards during the negotiations on the draft resolution being considered today.

However, one delegation decided to make amendments to the text that would undermine unity. We consider such destructive behaviour on the part of the Mexican delegation deeply regrettable, especially taking into account its status as coordinator of the anti-drug dossier in the Third Committee. Mexico's actions are at odds with the main goal of the sponsors of the draft resolution to unite the efforts of the entire world community to counter transnational drug crime.

Moreover, we see those amendments as a continuation of the effort begun last year to undermine unity on the anti-drug front. At that time, the same delegation, coordinating the work on resolution 77/238, which was supposed to be an updated anti-drug omnibus text, led States to a deliberately non-consensual, unbalanced and simply unacceptable text. As we know, based on the voting results, almost a third of States refused to support that resolution.

That outcome, however, was quite natural. The coordinators for the first time refused to follow established practice and take as a basis the consensus text of the resolution adopted at the seventy-sixth session. Instead, the authors offered their new vision of the document, in which the most important and central issues of compliance with relevant anti-drug conventions

and cooperation among law enforcement agencies were relegated to the background. The focus was shifted to concepts that do not enjoy universal support among States. None of those new approaches has been tested at the specialized Viennese forums. Naturally, for our delegation and many others, that approach turned out to be unacceptable, which ultimately led to a recorded vote for the first time in many years of work based on consensus.

We therefore cannot agree to refer to this document, much less focus on it in the way proposed in the draft amendment to the eighth preambular paragraph. Our position has been repeatedly communicated at consultations and is well known to all. Thus, the author of the amendments is deliberately attempting to break the consensus by introducing, in the form of an amendment to the final text, elements that are obviously unacceptable to other delegations. Under the draft resolution under consideration, the General Assembly has the opportunity to move beyond the failed experiment with resolution 77/238 and to try to return to what united us all. In that regard, we urge everyone to vote against the draft amendment to the eighth preambular paragraph.

As for draft amendment A/78/L.32, which seeks to amend the first preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/78/L.24, we will also vote against it. The ideas contained in that paragraph require further discussion and cannot be accepted in the form in which they were thrown in at the last moment by the Mexican delegation. Moreover, this is a matter of principle. Since the negotiation process on the draft resolution was consensus-oriented, participants acted accordingly. In the process of searching for a compromise, many delegations, including that of Russia, declined to reflect some of their priorities in the text.

Given the importance of solving the world drug problem and its individual aspects, including synthetics, we see only one way to work — through consensus, which enhances the status and strength of decisions adopted in this way, expressing the united will of the international community. In that regard, we urge delegations to reject the amendment proposed for the first preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/78/L.24.

Mr. Pilipenko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We wish to explain our votes on the draft amendments proposed by the delegation of Mexico in documents

A/78/L.31 and A/78/L.32. The Republic of Belarus will vote against the draft amendments presented by the Mexican delegation.

With regard to draft amendment A/78/L.31, which proposes the inclusion in the eighth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/78/L.24 of a reference to the non-consensus resolution 77/238, we note the following. The delegation of Mexico, in its note of 12 December 2023 circulated to Member States, claimed that the lack of mention in that paragraph of resolution 77/238 was an “omission”. That is a factually incorrect statement. The eighth preambular paragraph refers to all resolutions of the General Assembly, which by default includes resolution 77/238. No specific resolution from the entire multitude of documents on that topic, especially a resolution that was not only adopted by a recorded vote but also became the subject of serious controversy among Members of the Organization, should be singled out from others in that context. At the same time, the text of the amendment singles out resolution 77/238 on the basis that it is supposedly the most recent and, as claimed by the representative of Mexico, the only one. Let us recall that “most recent” does not mean the only one; it does not mean complete, nor important nor the best. We consider it unacceptable to build a hierarchy of the importance of resolutions based on the timing of their adoption.

We do not agree with the approach taken by the delegation of Mexico to draft amendment A/78/L.31 for another reason. We have never seen such a level of vanity and self-regard in the General Assembly. We can only imagine what would happen if every delegation came to negotiations insisting that “if the text does not refer to our resolution, we will put your resolution to a vote”. What would happen to the negotiation process? The question is rhetorical. It is obvious that the only reason for the introduction of the draft amendment by the Mexican delegation is an attempt to legitimize the complete fiasco of resolution 77/238 last year by including a reference in this document. The fact that this would also transfer last year’s serious problems and disagreements into a good text clearly does not bother the Mexican delegation.

With regard to draft amendment A/78/L.32, which proposes to insert the phrase “in illegal retail markets” in the first preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/78/L.24, we note the following. That paragraph is based on United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) resolution 66/2, and from the outset Belarus

advocated for the verbatim preservation of the language agreed within the CND. We made adjustments to the text that did not go beyond the parameters defined by the CND as the main body for reviewing and analysing the global drug problem.

Unfortunately, the Mexican delegation, in the aforementioned note dated 12 December 2023, again blatantly sought to mislead delegations by saying that the draft amendment was aimed at “a more comprehensive understanding of the full spectrum of the drug problem”. Obviously, that is far from the case. The proposed amendment narrows and distorts the meaning of the first preambular paragraph. If we read the amended paragraph carefully, we might conclude that illegally manufactured and illegally trafficked drugs can be legally sold in retail markets. We agree with previous speakers that those concepts require further discussion.

We believe that the General Assembly should not generate terminology for the CND and that the first preambular paragraph should agree with CND resolution 66/2 and retain its broad scope. Therefore, Belarus will also vote against draft amendment A/78/L.32.

Ms. Rizk (Egypt): My delegation thanks the United States for presenting draft resolution A/78/L.24 to address the global public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs as a component of addressing and countering the world drug problem, while cognizant of the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in that domain and the mandate given to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime related thereto. We support the draft resolution as introduced by the United States delegation.

On the draft amendment proposed in document A/78/L.31, to insert a specific reference to resolution 77/238, my delegation is of the view that the existing preambular paragraph is all-encompassing and represents a compromise that should have led to consensus on the draft resolution. However, the draft amendment constitutes an act of coercion exercised by a few delegations to bestow legitimacy on the only General Assembly resolution on addressing and countering the world drug problem to have been adopted by a recorded vote. That resolution does not constitute a basis for consensus and future action on the world drug problem, while Vienna remains the mainstay of consultations on that issue. The guiding

General Assembly resolution in that domain remains the latest omnibus resolution 76/188.

The draft amendment presented today comes despite the visible divisions and utter lack of consensus on including this reference in an issue-specific resolution. We thank the United States for respecting the views of Member States during the informal consultations and refraining from including divisive language in order to preserve consensus. However, it appears that a few Member States are willing to pursue and do pursue the aim of breaking the consensus to enforce their views on the wider United Nations membership. Therefore, my delegation joins the call for a vote on the forementioned draft amendment; we will vote against, and we appeal to delegations to vote likewise to preserve consensus on the draft resolution.

On the draft amendment contained in document A/78/L.32, to insert the phrase “in illicit retail markets” in the first preambular paragraph of A/78/L.24, it is worth noting that this phrase was never presented during the informal consultations or in the written submission of comments on the zero draft of the draft resolution under consideration. Accordingly, it has not been subject to discussions among Member States. It is unfortunate that the draft amendment is not backed by a source of Vienna-based agreed language. The definition of the types of markets where synthetic drugs are being distributed should be subject to a technical and legal discussion within the framework of mandated commissions, namely, the Commission on Narcotic drugs.

Accordingly, my delegation will vote against the proposed draft amendment and appeals to other Member States to vote likewise.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.14, entitled “Sustainable, safe and universal water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services in health-care facilities”.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/78/L.14 was adopted (resolution 78/130).

The President: Before we proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.24, in accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the Assembly shall first

take a decision on draft amendments A/78/L.31 and A/78/L.32, one by one.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft amendment A78/L.31.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay

Against:

Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cameroon, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Syrian Arab Republic, Tonga, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

Abstaining:

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Brunei Darussalam, China, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ecuador, Guyana, India, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, United States of America, Viet Nam

Draft amendment A/78/L.31 was adopted by 75 votes to 27, with 36 abstentions.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft amendment A/78/L32.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Kiribati, Mexico, Namibia, Panama, Paraguay, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay

Against:

Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Mali, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tonga, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Viet Nam, Yemen

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft amendment A/72/L.32 was rejected by 36 votes to 19, with 82 abstentions.

The President: Since draft amendment A/78/L.31 was adopted, we shall proceed to take action on draft resolution A/78/L.24, as amended.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.24, entitled “Enhancing action at the national, regional and international levels to address the global public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs”, as amended.

In the absence of a request for a recorded vote, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.24, as amended?

Draft resolution A/78/L.24, as amended, was adopted (resolution 78/131).

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

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Drugs are a common threat to human society and the international community has the joint responsibility to control them. Resolution 78/131, on synthetic drugs, which has just been adopted by the General Assembly, confirms the international drug control mechanism based on three United Nations conventions, is balanced overall in requiring a reduction of both supply and demand, and makes it clear that international cooperation is needed on synthetic drugs control based on the principle of joint responsibility.

The resolution makes reference to domestic laws and the situations of countries multiple times, which demonstrates respect for the judicial systems and national contexts of Member States. It should be pointed out that the resolution can be further improved in terms of calling for demand reduction and containing drug abuse, but in general it helps to enhance the international community’s awareness of the harm caused by synthetic drugs and sends a clear signal about the need to address the threat they pose. China therefore joined the consensus on the resolution,

Ms. Boma (Zambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Chinese Government has consistently adhered to a rigid drug control policy. We put people first and maintained a zero-tolerance attitude towards drugs. We have consistently taken rigorous to combat drug issues and have carried out large-scale campaigns against drugs. China has been committed to confronting drug issues internally and to deepening international cooperation on drug control. China takes seriously the harm caused by synthetic drugs to human society. As

early as in 2019, China started listing all fentanyl-like substances as controlled substances and has taken a series of effective measures to crack down on the entire category. China is the first and so far only country to do this. Thus, China has played a pivotal role in preventing the illegal production, circulation and abuse of such substances.

The international community should come together to tackle the issue of synthetic drugs based on the principle of shared responsibility. Each country needs to start from its national context and take targeted measures to live up to its international obligations. For countries with abuse problems, the correct approach is to face the issue directly and address the root causes by taking effective measures to reduce domestic demand instead of deflecting responsibility elsewhere. If they do not, the fundamental problem cannot be solved.

China is willing to work with all parties and make further contributions to the efforts to address the threat of synthetic drugs and safeguard people’s health and well-being.

Sheikha Al-thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) — namely, the State of Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain and my own country, the State of Qatar — to explain our position on resolution 78/131, entitled “Enhancing action at the national, regional and international levels to address the global public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs.

We welcome the adoption of draft resolution A/78/L.24 and sincerely thank the delegation of the United States for its valuable efforts to facilitate the relevant negotiations. Our States voted in favour of the resolution, which highlights important issues, including the serious threat that the global drug problem poses to public health and security, as well as the challenges linked to the illegal manufacture, trafficking and distribution of synthetic drugs, in addition to their use for non-medical and non-scientific purposes. Given the threat posed by the problem of drugs at the international level to the present and future of all the world countries, our States believe in the importance of international cooperation and concerted efforts in order to address that problem, in cooperation with various United Nations agencies and organs.

Our States joined consensus on the resolution because tireless efforts were undertaken to achieve that consensus during the informal negotiations. The GCC States voted against amendment A/78/L.31, on the eighth preambular paragraph of resolution 78/131, because, from the procedural standpoint, we consider that there is no need to mention a specific resolution while that preambular paragraph recalls all General Assembly resolutions on addressing and combating the problem of global drugs. Therefore, our States disassociate themselves from the amendment introduced in the eighth preambular paragraph.

Mrs. Birrer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland thanks the United States for introducing the important resolution 78/131, aimed at strengthening measures to address the challenges posed by synthetic drugs. I would like to focus my intervention on the following three elements: first, availability; secondly, the importance of resolution 77/238 and Human Rights Council resolution 52/24; and thirdly, the need to collaborate with various United Nations partners.

Concerning availability, synthetic drugs require innovative responses and coordinated action among States. Switzerland continues to share its national best practices aimed at striking a balance between reducing the illegal use of synthetic drugs and their availability for medical purposes and scientific research. Switzerland is committed to ensuring the availability and access of those substances for the legitimate needs of pain relief, anaesthesia, mental health and palliative care. We therefore thank the authors of the resolution for including key elements related to the obligation to ensure the availability of synthetic drugs as essential medicines and to improve prevention and the accessibility of evidence-based treatments for dependent people.

We regret, however, that the final text does not make reference to resolution 77/238, on addressing and combating the world drug problem through a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach, which takes an inclusive approach centred on human rights. That is why Switzerland supported draft amendment A/78/L.31, proposed by Mexico, and hopes that it will promote the establishment of balanced, coherent and inclusive approaches necessary to combat synthetic drugs for non-medical use.

Switzerland also notes with concern the absence of reference to Human Rights Council resolution 52/24,

on the contribution of the Council with regard to the human rights implications of drug policy, adopted by consensus in Geneva in April. That resolution addresses issues that are key to meeting the challenges posed by synthetic drugs — from access to harm reduction services to proportionality of sentences, impact on women and racial discrimination — in the design and implementation of all drug policies, including specific action on synthetic drugs.

Finally, the various United Nations agencies must be able to work closely together, each within the framework of their respective mandates, to address issues relating to human rights, health and drug-related crime. We therefore call for the expertise of the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, UN-Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AID to enhance their expertise and technical assistance in favour of Member States, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in order to effectively combat synthetic drugs for non-medical use.

Mr. Kanimba (United Kingdom): On behalf of the United Kingdom, I thank the representatives of the Philippines and Hungary for their work on and facilitation of the important resolution 78/130. We were happy to join consensus on the resolution and welcome the opportunity to set out our position.

The United Kingdom recently published a white paper on international development that reiterates our commitment to this important issue, including by strengthening water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and climate-resilient health systems. We are founding members of the Global Taskforce on WASH in Health-Care Facilities, and we work with Governments and partners to support strong systems that provide resilient and sustainable WASH services for health. We therefore welcome the resolution, noting its focus on uniting and reinforcing national, regional and global efforts towards progress, under strong national health leadership.

However, we are concerned that the resolution does not sufficiently address some important cross-sectoral issues. We regret that there is no mention of climate resilience, despite the contribution of WASH services to a more climate-resilient health system, and we note intergovernmental agreement on the importance of climate-resilient water supply and sanitation at the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The resolution also does not adequately acknowledge the issue of antimicrobial resistance and the role that WASH in health-care facilities plays in combatting that growing threat. Finally, although there is language on the specific impacts on women and girls, it is limited and does not sufficiently recognize the relationship between WASH, maternal and newborn mortality and access to quality sexual and reproductive health services and rights.

However, we look forward to working with our partners and Member States to press for progress in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 and other interlinked Sustainable Development Goals, and access to safe, sustainable, gender-responsive and climate-resilient WASH, waste and energy services in health-care facilities.

Ms. Kim (Australia) I deliver this statement on behalf of New Zealand and my own country, Australia, in regard to the adoption of resolution 78/131.

We thank the United States for bringing forward this resolution on an important and pressing issue to address the ongoing health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs. We appreciate its ongoing leadership on this matter, particularly through the establishment of the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats. We continue to make every effort to increase global cooperation to address the challenges posed by synthetic drugs, and we will continue to push for increased cooperation and collaboration on this.

We are pleased to see the resolution adopted and, at the same time, welcome efforts to try to achieve consensus. We look forward to continuing this discussion through the Global Coalition at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March next year. We welcome the vital calls made through the resolution to improve access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, increase information exchange and encourage the exploration of innovative and forward-looking approaches to combat that dynamic threat. However, we do believe that the resolution could have been strengthened with stronger language on public health, human rights and harm reduction elements of drug policy. This was a missed opportunity.

Australia and New Zealand take a balanced approach in responding to and addressing the diverse elements of the world drug situation. It is imperative that any response to that particular threat appropriately

focus on public health while safeguarding human rights. We look forward to continuing to contribute constructively to all elements of that important work.

Mrs. Arab Bafrani (Islamic Republic of Iran): In the fight against illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse, my country has always been at the forefront. While losing their lives in this struggle, Iranian law enforcement forces have fought courageously and with dedication. The Islamic Republic of Iran promotes a drug-free world. The statistics of recent seizures by Iran's anti-narcotic police, particularly since 2021, show the rampant increase in the transfer of amphetamine-type stimulants, especially methamphetamine, across the eastern border. Given the situation of Iran as a front-line country, the transformation of confiscation patterns can serve as a warning.

The surge in synthetic drugs is contingent on the increase in the import, export and illicit trafficking of precursor chemicals. Therefore, it is our common and differentiated responsibility to comprehensively address the diverse aspects of the world drug problem, with a special focus on preventing and countering the illicit production, manufacture, diversion and trafficking of synthetic drugs, their precursors and other chemicals used in their illicit manufacture.

It should be highlighted that Iran strongly supports the principal role of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the policymaking body of the United Nations with prime responsibility for drug control matters, as well as the treaty-mandated role of the International Narcotics Control Board and its monitoring function.

Regarding the process, I would like to highlight a few points.

My delegation actively and constructively engaged in the negotiation process of resolution 78/131, entitled "Enhancing action at the national, regional and international levels to address the global public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs", from the outset. Despite the constructive spirit shown, some key elements requested by my delegation, aimed at bringing balance to the text, were streamlined by the facilitators, including the necessity of addressing the importance of removing restrictive and financial impediments, such as unilateral coercive measures, to effectively address and counter the world drug problem. We also requested the inclusion of a specific paragraph that would recognize the need to promote the

provision of technical assistance and financial support to developing countries, including the provision of equipment and technology for detecting, identifying and analysing new synthetic drugs. Unfortunately, that was also omitted from the final version.

With that, the Islamic Republic of Iran, in a spirit of constructive engagement, joined the consensus adoption of resolution 78/131. However, my delegation disassociates itself from the eighth preambular paragraph, containing a reference to resolution 77/238, included in amendment A/78/L.31, proposed by Mexico, since my delegation voted against that amendment to the resolution.

Since I have the floor, I want to reference another resolution. With respect to resolution 78/130, entitled “Sustainable, safe and universal water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services in health-care facilities”, I would like to thank the delegations of Hungary and the Philippines for facilitating the process of negotiation of the resolution. I would also like to submit that the consideration and implementation of the resolution by the Islamic Republic of Iran are subject to its domestic laws and national priorities, as well as its social, cultural and religious values and specificities.

Mr. González Behmaras (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba has a zero-tolerance policy on the production, consumption and trafficking of drugs, the essential pillar of which is a preventative approach that guarantees that our country is neither a producer nor a transit country for illicit drugs. We are firmly committed to the international legal framework for drug control, which must continue to be made-up of the three United Nations conventions on drugs, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board. We recognize the guidance provided by the Political Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the General Assembly in 2009, the ministerial statements of 2014 and 2019, and the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, on the world drug problem (resolution S-30/1). We also recognize the leadership and guiding role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime within the United Nations system in that area.

International cooperation is the essential means to address that scourge on the basis of the common and shared responsibility of all States, strictly in line with international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, such as the sovereignty and territorial

integrity of States and non-interference in their domestic affairs. In addressing the world drug problem, we must avoid the use of terms, the definition and scope of which are not clear to all Member States. We are not in favour of terms or action that could undermine the current drug control regime.

The production of synthetic drugs is an emerging phenomenon within the world drug problem. As such, it must be combated within the regime of the current inspection and control system. We hope that the resolution will contribute in that regard. We are convinced that only through international cooperation will our countries be able to address the scourge.

On the basis of those reasons, my delegation engaged constructively in the negotiation process for resolution 78/131 and abstained in the voting on the two amendments contained in documents A/78/L.31 and A/78/L.32. With respect to resolution 77/238, which is referred to in the amendment that was adopted, my delegation expressed its serious and legitimate concerns at the time, which remain fully valid. Resolution 77/238 does not represent the basis for a balanced approach to the world drug problem. That basis must remain the omnibus drug resolution 76/188, adopted by consensus at the seventy-sixth session.

In any case, Cuba will continue to promote cooperation with all countries and relevant international bodies on the basis of the international legal framework for drug control, and will continue to rigorously implement our zero-tolerance policy to combat that scourge.

Mr. Bulgaru (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Considering the importance of resolving the global drug problem and certain aspects thereof, including synthetics, our delegation decided to join in the adoption of resolution 78/131 as a whole, as amended, despite the changes introduced to the eighth preambular paragraph by Mexico. Our position on that paragraph was clearly reflected in the negotiations and in our statements before the voting.

That said, in order to have the utmost clarity and to avoid any bad-faith attempt to cite resolution 77/238 in Vienna as a consensus-based resolution, we have the following to say now.

Considering that the Mexican amendment to the eighth preambular paragraph was included in the adopted resolution, the delegation of the Russian

Federation disassociates itself from the consensus on that paragraph as a whole. In its amended form, the paragraph does not reflect our positions or approaches. Moreover, Russia will continue to believe that resolution 77/238 is not consensus-based. It does not take the principled stance of many States into consideration and cannot serve as a basis for international cooperation, including on matters of fighting synthetic drugs.

Our delegation will continue to hold to this line, including at the forthcoming medium-term implementation review that is scheduled to take place in March in Vienna in the context of the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Mr. Al-Musawi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation would like to explain its position after the adoption of resolution 78/131, entitled "Enhancing action at the national, regional and international levels to address the global public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs".

My country's delegation expresses its thanks to the introducers of the resolution and their efforts to draft a consensus text with no controversial language. However, we regret that amendments were introduced that are not in line with our national laws. Therefore, my country's delegation disassociates itself from the eighth preambular paragraph of the resolution.

Ms. Tickner (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Colombia supports the important resolution 78/131, on synthetic drugs, as well as the amendments proposed by the delegation of Mexico.

We wish to highlight the shortcomings that characterize the current approach to the world drug problem, and we reiterate that it cannot continue without substantial modifications. Our country has moved towards a national drug policy that prioritizes the preservation of life, dignity and human rights, public health, peace and environmental conservation. That prioritization ensures that people, particularly those in vulnerable situations, are at the centre.

Likewise, Colombia remains firmly committed to combating criminal organizations dedicated to the production of illicit drugs and related crimes, such as money-laundering. We therefore advocate the intensification of international cooperation aimed at forceful interdiction actions that are also balanced, multidisciplinary and based on empirical evidence.

We urge our collective efforts to be channelled towards a broad, comprehensive and balanced understanding of drug-related issues, in accordance with resolution 77/238 of 2022. To that extent, while we understand the legitimate concerns of many countries regarding synthetic drugs, we believe that a holistic approach is the most appropriate.

Finally, we emphasize the importance of the report of the Human Rights Council entitled "Human rights challenges in addressing and countering all aspects of the world drug problem" (A/HRC/54/53). The report recognizes persistent shortcomings in access to treatment and harm-reduction services, the dangers of militarization in policy implementation, and the negative effects of the imbalance between punitive approaches and human rights protections. It is time for the international community to set the punitive approach aside since, in addition to its human costs, it has proven ineffective in reducing both the supply of and the demand for drugs.

Mr. Weerasekara (Sri Lanka): Sri Lanka gives high priority to the strict application of laws against the production, distribution, possession and illicit manufacture of and trafficking in synthetic drugs. It must be accepted without demur that easy access to such illicit drugs leads to increased abuse, a threat to public order and serious prejudice to national security. We cannot at any cost compromise in any way our policies against the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in synthetic drugs if we are to seriously address the menace of drug abuse. Our legal systems must be encouraged to respond in the strictest of manners to the issue of drug abuse and those engaged in the illicit trade in and marketing of such illicit drugs.

We recognize, however, that even laws against drug abuse must be clear, fair and predictable and have due regard for the rule of law. We must speak in one voice if we are to safeguard the future generations to whom we will hand over this planet. In that process, we must hand over a sustainable healthy planet, democratic governance and a global community of high moral values. We cannot, therefore, accommodate in any form the use of illicit drugs. .

With regard to the amendment (A/78/L.31) proposed to the eighth preambular paragraph of resolution 78/131, referencing resolution 77/238, entitled "Addressing and countering the world drug problem through a comprehensive, integrated and

balanced approach”, Sri Lanka abstained in the voting. My delegation observes that the focus of that resolution was diluted by provisions that are important but not integral to the matter of addressing and countering the global drug problem. The resolution adopted last year regrettably lacked any mention of the important need for the destruction of the cultivation of any vegetation that provides the raw material for illicit drug production and use. The resolution also lacked any reference to international cooperation between law enforcement agencies responsible for combating the global narcotics problem.

However, Sri Lanka voted in favour of the proposed amendment (A/78/L.32) to the first preambular paragraph, given the importance we attach to the principal objective of combating the industry of illicit manufacture of and trafficking in synthetic drugs. We reiterate the need to strengthen national drug control measures and international cooperation to combat the global threat of narcotic drugs in the most effective manner.

Mr. Pilipenko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus thanks the delegation of the United States of America for introducing resolution 78/131, which is aimed at drawing attention to the very pressing problem of synthetic drugs. We welcome the adoption of the document by consensus, but, taking into account the circumstances set out by the Republic of Belarus when explaining its position on amendment A/78/L.31, we disassociate ourselves from the eighth preambular paragraph.

We also wish to note that the problem of synthetic drugs faces every State with varying degrees of severity. In that context, Belarus is no exception. Crimes related to illegal activities in relation to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors and analogues in 2022 amounted to 5.1 per cent of all crimes committed in Belarus, becoming the third most common type of criminal practice.

Our Republic is located at a busy crossroads of sharply increased cross-border parallel flows of plant-based drugs from Afghanistan, South-East Asia and Central Asia to the countries of Western Europe, and of synthetic drugs and psychotropic substances in the opposite direction, to the east. Currently, illicit drug consumption and trafficking, in particular of synthetic drugs, are a pressing social problem in Belarus, in relation to which the President and Government

of the Republic of Belarus are taking targeted and effective measures.

As a result of practical measures taken to prevent crimes and ensure effective control over drug addicts, from January to September, compared to the same period last year, there was a decrease of 11.5 per cent in the number of detected drug crimes, representing a decrease of 16.4 per cent in the number of referrals to health-care facilities due to drug poisoning. The number of fatal poisonings has decreased. The number of criminal cases sent to court in which minors were accused decreased by a factor of 2.5, while crimes related to sales committed by teenagers fell by a factor 2.6. The number of minors who committed crimes fell by 37.6 per cent.

Efforts at the national level are complemented by collaboration at the regional and international levels. As Chairman of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), we have also drawn attention to the problem of drugs in general and synthetic drugs in particular in the course of the work of the CSTO over the past year, under the chairmanship of Belarus, in the regional and international contexts.

In accordance with the CSTO main activities plan for 2023, the subregional anti-drug operation Channel Intercept was carried out in September on the territory of the CSTO member States. The operation was attended by law enforcement agencies, border and customs authorities, State security services, financial intelligence units of the CSTO member States, and observers from China, Iran, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and other organizations. In total, more than 12,000 staff of the competent authorities were involved in the operation.

As a result of coordinated actions, about 900 kilograms of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances were seized on the territory of CSTO member States, four illegal drug laboratories were liquidated, almost 400 people were detained for committing crimes related to drug trafficking, more than 400 Internet sites were identified through which prohibited information related to drugs was distributed, and more than 50,000 suspicious financial transactions were recorded involving more than 300 individuals allegedly involved in drug trafficking. A large transnational organized crime community was uncovered through joint efforts.

On 7 September, the ensuing coordination meeting of the chief drug experts of the CSTO member States was held in Minsk, at which the participants discussed current trends in the development of the drug situation in the CSTO area of responsibility and its individual member States, as well as ways to solve the problem of illegal drug use, in part through health care. The participants also discussed a draft CSTO model law on the prevention of non-medical drug use. In late September, a working meeting of senior administrative officials of the CSTO, SCO and the CIS took place in Beijing, at which, among other things, the participants shared their assessments of the situation in the field of drug trafficking. These activities demonstrate the importance that the Republic of Belarus attaches to the issue of the illegal drug trade.

In conclusion, we note that Belarus, as a bona fide participant in the three drug conventions, will continue to make every effort to solve the drug problem at all levels and interact constructively with all international partners on that issue.

Ms. Rizk (Egypt): Egypt considers that the world drug problem constitutes a serious threat to public health and national security, in addition to its dangerous social ramifications and negative impacts on individuals, families, societies and nations. It has to be addressed and countered from the prism of crime prevention. The illicit manufacture of and trafficking in synthetic drugs does indeed pose a grave challenge and requires national, regional and international coordinated action, through cooperation and exchange of experiences, in addition to the provision of required assistance to developing countries to raise their capacities in that domain.

Against that backdrop, Egypt has joined the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats, launched by the United States in July as a platform to enhance dialogue and cooperation in that regard. As we approach the mid-term review of the implementation of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Our Actions at the National, Regional and International Levels to Accelerate the Implementation of Our Joint Commitments to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem, it is incumbent upon us to remain focused on the fulfilment of our commitments contained therein. Egypt totally adheres to and respects the mandated role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to address and counter the world drug problem, as well the mandate

of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in that regard.

In order to achieve progress in addressing the world drug problem, consensus should form the basis of our collective action. Against that backdrop, Egypt decided to join the consensus on resolution 78/131. However, and since Egypt voted against the amendments on both the first and the eighth preambular paragraphs, my delegation is satisfied that the amendment to the first preambular paragraph (A/78/L.32) has failed, while we disassociate ourselves from the eighth preambular paragraph, as amended, and indicate that it does not constitute part of the consensus on the resolution and cannot be used as a basis for future discussions on addressing and countering the world drug problem.

Mrs. Llano (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation wishes to explain its position following the adoption of resolution 78/131, entitled “Enhancing action at the national, regional and international levels to address the global public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs”.

At the global level, we are seeing an unprecedented rise in the manufacture of cocaine and the expansion of synthetic drugs to new markets. Nicaragua is a State party to the three international drug control treaties and is committed to international cooperation in favour of a comprehensive, balanced strategy to counter the world drug problem. That is a matter of high priority for our country because it undermines States and the sustainable development of our peoples.

In that context, our delegation notes that we joined the consensus in order to address the importance of addressing the world drug problem at all levels. However, we disassociate ourselves from the amended eighth preambular paragraph, as we believe that it does not contribute to consensus on a topic of such importance as that before us today.

In conclusion, Nicaragua is committed to continuing to fight the scourge of drug trafficking and organized crime, with a focus on political and stability and peace.

Ms. Rajandran (Singapore): I am taking the floor in explanation of position after the adoption of resolution 78/131, entitled “Enhancing action at the national, regional and international levels to address the global public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs”.

Singapore joined consensus on the resolution because we agree that synthetic drugs have become a significant concern within the context of the world drug problem. The blight of synthetic drugs, including their illicit manufacture and trafficking, as well as the trafficking of their precursors, affects our country, our region and indeed the world. We support the facilitators' intent to draw attention to this issue, which has destroyed the lives of so many people.

Nevertheless, we voted against amendment A/78/L.31 to the eighth preambular paragraph of the resolution and categorically disassociate ourselves from that paragraph. The amendment cynically repositions this important text, linking it to the contentious resolution 77/238, which was the first drug resolution of the Assembly to lose the consensual support of Members States. The singling out of that resolution in the eighth preambular paragraph reframes the text and the wider discussion about drugs at the United Nations so that they are held in reference to the controversial and unbalanced themes of resolution 77/238. It is disappointing that certain delegations, in their stated attempt to impose an ambitious text on the Assembly, forsook consensus on a resolution that should have been considered separately from the existing Third Committee agenda item on international drug control. Singapore does not view resolution 77/238 as representative of our position or the agreed position of the General Assembly, and will continue to strenuously resist any effort to push a divisive and narrow agenda to reframe the discussion of the world drug problem in the Assembly and elsewhere.

The resolution presented an opportunity for the international community to recognize the threat of the synthetic drug problem. Synthetic drugs are dangerous, easier to produce than plant-based drugs and rapidly proliferating. It is unfortunate that true consensus on such an important issue could not be achieved because of an overly narrow agenda. Singapore sincerely hopes that discussions on international drug control will return to consensus and will focus on areas of agreement among States rather than the narrow interests of some.

Ms. Wallenius (Canada): Canada would like to thank the United States for its leadership in bringing forward resolution 78/131. Action at all levels is required to address the public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs. That is why Canada joined consensus on the resolution.

However, we remain concerned that the request to include a reference to resolution 77/238, on the world drug problem, was opposed by several delegations, resulting in the amendment brought forward by Mexico. Canada was happy to co-sponsor and vote in favour of the amendment to the eighth preambular paragraph, as contained in document A/78/L.31. The opioid overdose crisis, by which Canada and Canadians are directly affected, forms part of the world drug problem and is of vital importance. It requires international attention and cooperation, and as such it is entirely appropriate to reference that resolution and other relevant past resolutions in the text.

Our country believes that we must remain mindful of existing mandates and be complementary to other agencies and bodies. That includes the important contributions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and other United Nations entities to international efforts, within their mandates, in supporting Member States in addressing the situation and alleviating the current crisis. However, Canada would have liked to see a more ambitious text that considered how social and economic inequalities drive and are driven by drug challenges and the human rights impact of drug policies, including with respect to synthetic drugs.

Our country once again thanks the United States for bringing forward this initiative and looks forward to continuing to work with delegations to address that growing challenge.

Ms. Pella (Indonesia): Indonesia would like to deliver its explanation of position on resolution 78/131, entitled "Enhancing action at the national, regional and international levels to address the global public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs".

Indonesia joined the consensus and welcomes the adoption of the resolution. We extend our gratitude to the United States for its significant efforts in drafting and submitting a balanced resolution that accommodates the views of various Member States. The text is commendable for its balanced approach, encompassing essential elements crucial to fostering cooperation in the prevention and mitigation of challenges related to synthetic drugs at the domestic, regional and global levels.

As a nation profoundly concerned with the global drug problem, Indonesia's constructive engagement and support for the resolution reflect our dedication to implementing effective strategies and enhancing robust

international cooperation to combat the challenges posed by the scourge. However, we would like to express our disappointment with the amendments supported by a few delegations, which detract from the spirit of consensus essential to the success of any resolution, and on that basis we decided to vote against both amendments.

First, the omnibus drugs resolution 77/238 created much debate during its negotiation and adoption, due to substantial and procedural issues. That resulted in the resolution's being subjected to a recorded vote, unlike previous omnibus resolutions on drugs that enjoyed consensus. My delegation abstained in the voting and highlighted the resolution's imbalanced nature and failure to address the severity of the drug problem fully by selectively using language from past omnibus resolutions and neglecting key elements of international cooperation, as well as strong aspects of crime prevention. Following from our position in the adoption of resolution 77/238, my delegation also does not consider the resolution as a basis of international cooperation in countering the world drug problem and will adhere to resolution 76/188.

Secondly, when determining references for this resolution, we must adhere to the guidelines set by the Vienna documents. The concept of illicit retail markets lacks a foundation in the Vienna crime prevention framework. Introducing that term in the context of illegally manufactured and distributed drugs suggests the misleading notion that there is a legitimate market for illegal drugs, which is both incorrect and potentially damaging. Despite extensive negotiations and sideline meetings, that specific reference was not previously suggested for discussion among Member States. The delegation that proposed its insertion unexpectedly raised it at the last sideline meeting in an approach that many representatives found surprising and unconstructive.

Consensus at the United Nations represents a commitment to a cooperative spirit among 193 countries. That approach should not be diminished by any group prioritizing its own interest with a take-it-or-leave-it approach. We hope that any discussion in this organ will foster and sustain the spirit of consensus. With that reasoning, Indonesia would like to disassociate itself from the amended eighth preambular paragraph.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, we thank the United States for

its efforts to highlight the challenges derived from the abuse of synthetic drugs.

The Government of Mexico recognizes the multifactorial and constantly evolving threats posed by criminal markets for the production and transfer of synthetic drugs, as well as the challenges they pose to health, human rights and public safety. From the outset of the current Administration, Mexico has reworked its approach to the drug problem, adopting a comprehensive vision that addresses the phenomenon from the perspectives of public security, human rights and gender, public health, development, justice and well-being.

The Mexican delegation participated actively in all stages of negotiation of resolution 78/131, always with the objective of strengthening the text and achieving consensus. Despite the reservations we have expressed regarding the text, Mexico joined the consensus adoption of the resolution as we support the majority of its content. We value the inclusion of significant elements, such as the promotion of non-discriminatory and voluntary access to prevention and recovery services and the incorporation of a gender perspective. Furthermore, we welcome its recognition of the challenges faced by many countries, especially developing countries, in relation to access to controlled medicines to alleviate pain and suffering.

However, we regret that certain critical approaches to addressing the world drug problem have not been explicitly incorporated in that context. That includes reference to harm-reduction measures to reduce mortality related to drug use. Along the same lines, the lack of recognition of the important work of United Nations agencies and programmes, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AID and UN-Women, presents a biased vision of the multiplicity of actors involved and therefore of the totality of joint efforts, as well as the comprehensive vision that this issue requires. We also regret that the text lacks a clear focus on human rights.

On the other hand, we are pleased that amendment A/78/L.31, to include a reference to resolution 77/238, has been incorporated into the text, while we regret that amendment A/78/L.32, which sought recognition of the complete supply chain of the global drug problem, was not adopted. The adopted text unfortunately omits

mention of the distribution of drugs in illicit retail markets, which are undoubtedly part of the problem, despite the fact that the term was discussed at length and validated in the negotiating process.

Mexico reaffirms its commitment to addressing and countering the global drug problem, including synthetic drugs, through a comprehensive and complementary approach that harmonizes crime prevention and criminal justice policies with those aimed at achieving sustainable development. We are convinced that it is only through an effective combination of prevention and action, centred on the person and prioritizing human rights and public health, that we will be able to effectively confront this problem.

Mrs. Alonso Giganto (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

Resolution 78/131 makes an important contribution to the global response to the challenges posed by the illicit production and trafficking of synthetic drugs, as well as their consumption and use for non-medical and non-scientific purposes. The European Union supports the formulation of comprehensive and balanced actions in order to effectively respond to the threat, including through an active engagement with the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats.

The European Union attaches great importance to a human rights-based approach to the world drug situation, while countering crime and ensuring public safety and security, to address the manifold social, health and development-related aspects of the issue. We note with disappointment that those aspects are not adequately reflected in the resolution text.

We underline the importance of harm-reduction measures and the mainstreaming of a gender and age perspective to ensure the involvement of all relevant stakeholders at all stages of the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of drug policies and programmes, keeping in mind that women are disproportionately affected by synthetic drugs in particular and face significant barriers in accessing treatment.

The European Union strongly supports the comprehensive mandate of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which is closely linked to

human rights and respect for fundamental freedoms. We also note that multiple human rights challenges result from the world drug problem, and acknowledge the role of the Office in monitoring the situation, developing strategies on international drug control and recommending measures to address the problem. That is complemented by the important work of other relevant United Nations entities — such as UN-Women, the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights — on the world drug situation, as well as civil society, including affected communities. Human Rights Council resolution 52/24, on the human rights implications of drug policy, provides relevant guidance with regard to those aspects, and we regret the absence of a reference to that crucial resolution in the text.

Despite the aforementioned human rights-related shortcomings, the European Union decided to support resolution 78/131, as we recognize the necessity to formulate concerted responses to the threats posed by synthetic drugs.

Mr. Nayyal (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Regarding resolution 78/131, entitled “Enhancing action at the national, regional and international levels to address the global public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs”, we regret the fact that one delegation insisted on compelling Member States to engage in a vote that was not necessary. The language of the eighth preambular paragraph of resolution 78/131 before amendment A/78/L.31 was adopted referenced all resolutions, including the non-consensual resolution that the delegation of Mexico wanted to introduce into the text. We raised that issue many times during negotiations. The draft resolution adopted by the Third Committee last year in a recorded vote, for the first time, does not constitute a basis for consensual negotiations about the world drug problem.

For those reasons, my delegation dissociates itself from the eighth preambular paragraph, as amended, and we stress that it does not constitute a part of the consensus on resolution 78/131.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I give the floor to the observer of the observer State of the Holy See.

Monsignor Murphy (Holy See): The Holy See would like to thank the delegation of the United States for the facilitation of resolution 78/131, entitled “Enhancing action at the national, regional and international levels to address the global public health and security challenges posed by synthetic drugs”.

As a State party to the three international drug control conventions, the Holy See remains an ardent supporter of all efforts aimed at tackling the world drug problem to promote a society free of drug abuse in order to help ensure that all people can live in health, dignity and peace, with security and prosperity. The Holy See reiterates its support for initiatives to fight the evil of international drug trafficking and drug use that shatter lives, families and communities, posing a terrible threat to the security and well-being of the human family.

That is particularly true in the case of synthetic drugs, which pose new challenges and risks. They shift drug markets, requiring cheap chemical inputs that can be easily sourced, thereby benefiting criminal networks. Synthesis of drugs offers additional flexibility in terms of having no fixed geography and much shorter production times and supply chains. Moreover, synthetic drugs pose an additional threat owing to their often unknown pharmacology and harmful effects, as well as due to the lack of pharmacological treatments. It is essential, therefore, to continue efforts

to prevent and combat drug trafficking and use. The focus should be on preventing drug use, identifying trafficking networks and prosecuting criminals. Strong anti-drug laws should not treat harmful addictive substances, including synthetic drugs, as just another consumer product.

While appreciating the ability to achieve consensus on the adoption of the text as a whole, the Holy See notes once again that there are significantly diverging views among States on how to tackle the world drug problem. That reaffirms a concerning trend which has already led to a vote in the past on that important topic. In particular, in the amended text just adopted, we regret the explicit reference to a non-consensual resolution, which places an unbalanced focus on some aspects of the world drug problem and significantly limits the attention given to others.

Finally, the Holy See, in conformity with its nature and particular mission, is obliged to make the following reservation. The Holy See understands the term “gender” and any related phrase as grounded in biological sexual identity, male or female.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 125.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.