



# General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

**57<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting  
Monday, 26 February 2024, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Francis . . . . . (Trinidad and Tobago)

*In the absence of the President, Ms. Boma (Zambia),  
Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

## Agenda item 18 (continued)

### Sustainable development

#### Draft resolution (A/78/L.42)

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Uzbekistan to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.42.

**Mr. Lapasov (Uzbekistan):** I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.42, entitled “International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, 2027”, submitted by Uzbekistan and Maldives.

At the outset, I would like to thank all Member States for their active and constructive engagement and the valuable input they made during the negotiations.

Today global tourism accounts for 1 in 11 jobs, generating \$1.5 trillion in exports. Before the coronavirus disease pandemic, tourism accounted for 4.2 per cent of global gross domestic product, roughly the same share as agriculture. Tourism was the world’s third largest export earnings category after fuels and chemicals. Despite being the hardest hit by the pandemic, the tourism industry is recovering very fast. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), at the end of 2023 international tourism revenues returned to 88 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, with an estimated 1.3 billion

international arrivals. That is a very encouraging signal to the global community. We should maintain that positive dynamic, while ensuring the full recovery of the sector in a sustainable and resilient way. The twenty-fifth session of the UNWTO General Assembly, held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, last October, confirmed the importance of advancing a clear vision for the long-term transformation of the sector around concrete priorities.

Draft resolution A/78/L.42 recognizes that sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, is a cross-cutting activity that can contribute to achieving the three dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals. It decides to proclaim 2027 as the International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism and encourages all States, the United Nations system and all other actors to take advantage of the International Year to promote actions at all levels, including through international cooperation, in order to support sustainable and resilient tourism.

The draft resolution encourages the promotion of the equal participation of women, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making processes in all areas, as well as the promotion of effective economic empowerment, mainly through decent job and income creation. It invites the World Tourism Organization to facilitate the organization of the International Year, in collaboration with Governments, the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, and to inform the General Assembly at its eighty-third session on the implementation of the present draft resolution.

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](mailto:verbatimrecords@un.org)). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



We hope that observing the International Year will contribute to sustainable development, poverty eradication, environmental protection and the promotion of business opportunities. I hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus. I express my sincere gratitude to those countries that have already co-sponsored the draft resolution and encourage other Member States to do so.

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/78/L.42, entitled “International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism, 2027”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/78/L.42 and in addition to those delegations listed therein, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/78/L.42: Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Bhutan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Türkiye, Tuvalu, Ukraine, the United States of America, Viet Nam and Zambia.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.42?

*Draft resolution A/78/L.42 was adopted (resolution 78/260).*

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 18.

## **Agenda item 7 (continued)**

### **Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items**

**The Acting President:** I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft resolution A/78/L.39, circulated under sub-item (b) of agenda item 24, entitled “Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, persons with disabilities and the family”.

Members will recall that, at its 50th plenary meeting, on 19 December 2023, the General Assembly concluded its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 24. In order for the Assembly to take action on the draft resolution, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 24. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 24?

*It was so decided (decision 78/504 B).*

**The Acting President:** Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 8 September 2023, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (b) of agenda item 24 to the Second Committee. To enable the Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (b) of agenda item 24 directly in the plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

*It was so decided (decision 78/504 B).*

## **Agenda item 24 (continued)**

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

#### **Draft resolution (A/78/L.39)**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.39.

**Ms. Zacarias** (Portugal): Chile and Portugal, in our capacity as co-facilitators, also on behalf of the members of the core group — Belgium, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Morocco, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Viet Nam and Zambia — have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.39, entitled “World Social Summit under the title “Second World Summit for Social Development”.

In the Political Declaration adopted at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023, Heads of State and Government agreed to look forward to the proposed World Social Summit in 2025, as contained in the report entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), subject to discussions and agreement by the General Assembly on its modalities, and emphasized that the possible outcome of the Summit should have a social development approach and give momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Draft resolution A/78/L.39 aims to establish an intergovernmental mandate for the Summit to address the gaps and recommit to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and their implementation, and to give momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It also requests the President of the General Assembly to appoint two co-facilitators to take forward the intergovernmental preparatory process leading up to the Summit, consisting of its modalities and outcome.

The commitment made at the World Summit for Social Development almost 30 years ago remains very relevant today. The 2025 Summit is our opportunity to revitalize our social agenda by strengthening the social development pillars — namely, poverty eradication, social inclusion, social protection and decent work — and to commit to delivering practical solutions anchored in the respect of human rights, fundamental freedoms and human dignity. In conclusion, allow me to express a note of appreciation to all delegations for their constructive participation in achieving a consensual text. We greatly appreciate the co-sponsorship received and encourage all those who have not yet done so to join the list of sponsors.

**The Acting President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.39.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): The present oral statement is made in the context of rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and will also be distributed to Member States.

Under the terms of paragraphs 1 to 3 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to convene the “World Social Summit” in 2025, under the title “the Second World Summit for Social Development”, in order to address the gaps and recommit to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and its implementation and give momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; would request that the President of the General Assembly, consistent with the rules of the General Assembly, appoint two co-facilitators, one from a developing country and one from a developed country, to facilitate the intergovernmental preparatory process leading up to the Summit consisting of its modalities and outcome, which should be a short and concise political declaration adopted by consensus, and should have a social development approach and give momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and would request the Secretary-General to provide adequate support within existing resources to the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Summit.

With regard to paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, in the absence of modalities for the World Social Summit to be held in 2025, it is not possible at the present time to estimate the potential cost implications of the requirements of the Summit. When the format, scope and modalities of the Summit are determined, the Secretary-General will assess the budgetary implications and advise the General Assembly, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Furthermore, once the modalities are known, in accordance with established practice, the availability of conference services and the date of the Summit will be determined in consultation with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. In that regard, reference is made to paragraph 11 of resolution 69/250 and subsequent resolutions, the most recent of which is resolution 78/245, of 22 December 2023, in which the Assembly invited Member States to include in new legislative mandates adequate information on the modalities for the organization of conferences or meetings.

Furthermore, with regard to paragraphs 2 and 3 of the draft resolution, the Secretariat has taken note of the request by the General Assembly to provide adequate support within existing resources to the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Summit.

The Secretariat wishes to inform the General Assembly that its ability to provide support will depend on the availability of adequate cash resources.

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

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I wish to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/78/L.39, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become co-sponsors of draft resolution A/78/L.39: Andorra, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Eswatini, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, the Republic of Moldova Monaco, Mozambique, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Togo, Türkiye, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/78/L.39, entitled “‘World Social Summit’ under the title ‘Second World Summit for Social Development’”.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.39?

*Draft resolution A/78/L.39 was adopted (resolution 78/261)*

**The Acting President:** Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Mogyorósi** (Hungary): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Georgia, as well as San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

First, let me thank the core group of States that submitted resolution 78/261, adopted today, all delegations for their valuable contributions to the negotiations and the Secretariat for its support

throughout the process. We are pleased to join the consensus today.

While building on *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, momentum to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is continuing towards the holding of the World Social Summit in 2025. Rebuilding the social contract for a comprehensive approach — based on human rights, fundamental freedoms and labour standards — is key to overcoming mistrust and building social cohesion and solidarity. We understand that the new title of the World Social Summit does not limit its scope, which as the resolution stipulates should address the gaps in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and maintain momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our priorities include decent work, full and productive employment, social dialogue, adherence to international labour standards, social protection and social justice, thereby contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals and social integration.

Social justice and eradicating poverty are our fundamental aims, as enshrined in the Treaty on European Union. The EU and its member States promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, as a priority across all areas of action. We recognize the central role played by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in promoting social justice and decent work for all within the multilateral system, as the unique specialized agency giving an equal voice to workers, employers and Governments. Therefore, it is crucial to coordinate preparations for the World Social Summit with the ILO and its tripartite structure. The European Union and its member States strongly support the Global Coalition for Social Justice and its ambitions. The Coalition should play a crucial role in contributing to the Summit’s objectives and ensuring an effective follow-up. We are committed to engaging constructively and in the spirit of cooperation in the consecutive negotiations on the Summit’s modalities and reaching a political declaration.

**Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the delegations of Portugal and Chile for their efforts to coordinate the negotiation process and the entire group of sponsors for contributing to the adoption of resolution 78/261. As a State whose policy seeks to create the conditions necessary to



ensure decent lives and free human development, the Russian Federation joined the consensus and plans to actively participate in both developing the modalities of the Summit and the process of agreeing on a final document.

We view the Second World Summit for Social Development primarily as an opportunity for States to reaffirm their commitment to the commitments enshrined in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, which remain relevant today. We believe that the reference to addressing the gaps contained in paragraph 1 of resolution 78/261 means finding new ways to eradicate poverty, achieve full employment and social integration by means of intergovernmental dialogue. They must be the primary goals of social development and as such should be enshrined in the political declaration to be adopted by consensus at the conclusion of the 2025 World Summit, which will provide for a social development approach, including the need to place people at the centre of development. That has been repeatedly reaffirmed in other consensus resolutions, in particular resolution 78/174, entitled “Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly”, which was adopted in December 2023.

At the same time, we would like to underscore the fact that the absence of any reference to the Commission for Social Development in the resolution just adopted is surprising and disappointing, especially given that as recently as December 2023, States emphasized the need to strengthen the Commission’s role in the follow-up to and review of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. The members of the Commission have the required expertise to address such issues. Therefore, we believe that ignoring the Commission is yet another manifestation of the recent growing trend to shift work away from the specialized subsidiary bodies of the United Nations system, in particular the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Economic and Social Council, towards the principal bodies. In practice, that only leads to weakening the purview and undermining the authority of those specialized subsidiary bodies. We urge all stakeholders to harness the Commission’s potential during the next preparatory stages of the Second World Summit, to be held in 2025.

**Mrs. Kamboj (India):** At the onset, I would like to thank to the co-facilitators for submitting resolution 78/261, seeking to establish the mandate to convene the World Social Summit in 2025, under the title “Second World Summit for Social Development”.

As we look back, we recall the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, which pledged to make the conquest of poverty, the goal of full employment and the fostering of social integration the overriding objectives of development. India was one of the Vice-Chairs of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee of the Summit and contributed actively to the preparations for the Summit in 1995.

Thereafter, in the past 28 years since the World Social Summit, the world has made progress towards the full implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development through concerted action at the national, regional and international levels. We all agree, however, that progress has been slow and uneven and that major gaps still remain.

From my country’s perspective, I will say that today India is surging forward with the vision of *sabkasaath sabkavikas*, which means developing together and leaving no one behind. The Government of India has been working to ensure basic necessities for all citizens of the country through various programmes and schemes for the holistic welfare of the marginalized sections of society. Whether it be in the unprecedented number of houses built, the water connections given, the bank accounts opened, the direct benefit transfers to farmers or the free gas connections, we are on our way. In that context, I am pleased to share that 135 million Indians have escaped multidimensional poverty in the past five years, and we are on track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal target 1.2 well ahead of the 2030 deadline.

I conclude by saying that India remains steadfast in partnering with Member States and the United Nations system to fulfil the pledge of leaving no one behind as we seek collectively to dignify all. We are deeply committed to fostering the development of every individual, ensuring that our efforts contribute to the holistic growth and well-being of all humankind.

**Ms. Majeed (Pakistan):** My delegation takes the floor to deliver our explanation of position on resolution 78/261. We thank the co-facilitators of

the resolution — Portugal and Chile — for their commendable efforts in shepherding the resolution towards its consensual adoption. Pakistan joined the consensus on the final text of the resolution but would like to make the following points in explanation of position.

The resolution has mandated us to convene a world social summit under the title “the Second World Summit for Social Development”. The scope of the Summit is explicitly defined in paragraph 1 of the resolution, which states that the Summit will address the gaps and recommit to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and its implementation and give momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Hence, we understand that the Summit will strictly address social development and address gaps in the implementation of the Copenhagen outcomes. We also understand that the intergovernmental preparatory process leading up to the Summit will be limited, first, to the Summit’s modalities, and secondly, to negotiations on its political declaration. We stress that the upcoming negotiations on the modalities and outcome of the Summit should not attempt to reopen or renegotiate the scope of the Summit as set out in paragraph 2. We look forward to participating constructively in the negotiations on the modalities.

**Ms. Rizk (Egypt):** My delegation takes note of the initiative by a group of Member States to champion the proposal contained in the Secretary-General’s report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) to hold a social summit in 2025. In that regard, my delegation emphasizes that the proposed summit has transformed to be the Second World Summit for Social Development in order to provide an opportunity to Member States to recommit to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development as adopted in 1995. Indeed, almost 30 years hence, the international community — which is composed of us as Member States — has fallen short of its commitments under the Copenhagen outcomes. Gaps still remain.

Amid world upheaval and global challenges and their impact on nations and peoples, as well as individuals, the three pillars of the Copenhagen outcomes — poverty eradication; full and productive employment and decent work for all; and social integration — remain as relevant today as they were almost 30 years ago. In

addition, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals and targets have clearly put forward the eradication of poverty as the overarching goal — a commitment that has just been renewed in the Political Declaration adopted at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, under the auspices of the General Assembly, in September 2023.

Against that backdrop, my delegation emphasizes that the proposed outcome of the Second World Summit for Social Development is to be focused only on social development, placing people at the centre of development, in faithful application of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, a focus which is replicated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. My delegation also emphasizes that the Commission on Social Development, in its capacity as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council, remains and will continue to be the sole United Nations body tasked with the role of follow-up to and review of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, and we look forward to its contribution to the upcoming intergovernmental process on the Second World Summit for Social Development.

It is regrettable to note that the environment in which resolution 78/261 was negotiated drifted away from the spirit of cooperation as a result of the persistent attempts by a few delegations to impose their views on what should constitute the proposed social summit. My delegation joined the consensus out of a renewed commitment to social development, as elaborated in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and in order to initiate an intergovernmental process whereby Member States are able to identify gaps and challenges in its implementation. As such, it is the sincere wish of my delegation that the future process established by resolution 78/261 will not be constrained by the same atmosphere and that a constructive spirit aimed at achieving consensus, in fulfilment of our commitments under the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, will be our goal. In that connection, we appreciate the efforts of the co-facilitators and the core group of countries to attempt to bridge the gaps between delegations in that regard towards consensus. We look forward to the preparatory intergovernmental process of the Summit, and we are open to discussion in the context of constructive engagement.

**Mrs. Mozgovaya (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*):** The delegation of Belarus would like to thank the sponsors

of resolution 78/261 for preparing the draft and reaching agreement on it during the intergovernmental negotiation process.

The Republic of Belarus is committed to the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. We are in favour of bolstering global cooperation in order to achieve social development and social justice. Unfortunately, progress in socioeconomic development in the world remains uneven and there are gaps in achieving the strategic aims of social development: poverty eradication, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and social integration. Belarus believes that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and manifestations remains the most important global challenge and a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development.

In that regard, we welcome the initiative to convene the Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025. That will enable States to reaffirm their commitment to implementing the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. It will also give an impetus to international cooperation to ensure the social protection and equality of all people, ensuring that no one is left behind in the quest for sustainable development. That is precisely what the political declaration of the Summit must seek to achieve.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position after the adoption of resolution 78/261.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 24.

#### **Agenda item 65 (continued)**

##### **(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress on implementation and international support**

##### **Draft resolution (A/78/L.38)**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.38.

**Mr. Kwoba (Uganda):** On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.38, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support". The draft resolution highlights the progress made by African countries in the implementation of their various programmes and projects, as well as the support received by development partners. It also provides insight into how far Africa has come since the previous resolution by this title, adopted by the General Assembly a year ago (resolution 77/270) and places the spotlight firmly on the areas that need support in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. It is also important that we fulfil all of the commitments to advance critical actions for Africa's sustainable development.

The Group welcomes the remarkable collective effort to seek convergence in the views and concerns of all parties and the immense flexibility shown in the formulation of consensual language throughout the text of the draft resolution. In that regard, we would like to thank our delegations for their constructive engagement and valuable input, which greatly enriched the draft resolution. We also thank the facilitator, Mr. Swabri Ali Abbas of Kenya, for his tireless efforts and work in moving towards consensus. Furthermore, we convey our appreciation to the coordinators of the resolution, Mr. Jeswuni Abudu-Birresborn of Ghana and Mrs. Audrey Gantana of Namibia, who brilliantly negotiated on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

In conclusion, the Group looks forward to the consensual adoption, once again, of this important draft resolution. We therefore invite all delegations that have not yet sponsored this draft resolution to do so before its adoption.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/78/L.38.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.38?

*Draft resolution A/78/L.38 was adopted (resolution 78/262).*

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

**Mr. De Maesschalck** (Belgium): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Türkiye, Montenegro and the Republic of Moldova and the European Free Trade Association country Norway align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, let me express the EU's gratitude to Kenya and Angola as the facilitators of the process of negotiations on the resolutions 78/262 and 78/263 entitled, respectively, "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support" and "Promotion of durable peace through sustainable development in Africa". We also thank Ghana and the Gambia, as coordinators of the Group of 77 and China, and other delegations for their active and constructive engagement in the negotiations.

The African Union and the European Union have a close and long-standing partnership on a wide range of issues, in particular security and development, rooted in dialogue and multilateralism. Our partnership is solution-oriented and forward-looking. Europe and Africa need each other to build a solid and lasting response to global common challenges — from climate change, financing, energy, food security and peace and security to strengthening health systems.

Our daily work in the United Nations to promote sustainable development, conflict prevention and resolution, including on the African continent, bears witness to how much we prioritize those issues. Maintaining consensus on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and "Causes of conflict" resolutions is a priority for the EU and its member States, and the EU has engaged actively in the negotiations.

We welcome several important developments in the NEPAD resolution this year, notably on combating climate change. Europe and Africa are like-minded allies in our ambition to tackle global sustainability challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss, which have a dramatic impact on livelihoods and development opportunities in Africa.

In the "Causes of conflict in Africa" draft resolution, we were able to celebrate two recent milestone achievements: the agreement in the Fifth Committee on assessed contributions for the Peacebuilding Fund and the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2719 (2023), on potential United Nations financing of African-led peace support operations. Both of those

achievements have been long-standing priorities for African countries and for the European Union.

We also started a good conversation about the establishment of a fellowship for young Africans at the United Nations. We look forward to continuing that discussion and exploring how we can best support the Group of African States in building capacity for young Africans at the United Nations.

The EU and its member States remain committed to our partnership with Africa. We will continue to work towards enhanced and strengthened cooperation with our African partner countries.

**Mr. Fogarty** (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join the consensus resolution 78/262, and we thank Kenya for its facilitation of the resolution. We would like to take this opportunity to clarify our positions regarding some of the language contained in the text.

The United States supports a strong and effective United Nations system. Likewise, we uphold and respect the authority, independent mandates and roles of institutions outside the United Nations system when it comes to promoting international monetary and financial stability, encouraging robust trade and raising worldwide living standards. We welcome the efforts of Member States to ensure that actions taken at the United Nations do not seek to influence important independent institutions, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. We underscore our position that trade language negotiated or adopted by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, or under their auspices, has no relevance for United States trade policy, for our trade obligations or commitments or for the agenda at the WTO, including discussions or negotiations in that forum. For our comprehensive positions on trade, innovation, technology transfer, multilateral development bank evolution, climate policy and other issues, we refer the Assembly to our full Second Committee general statement dated 9 November 2023 (see A/C.2/78/SR.21).

With regard to paragraph 14, the United States joined the consensus, with the express understanding that this resolution does not alter the current state of conventional or customary international law regarding access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene.



With regard to paragraph 23, we regret that the characterization of the \$100 billion goal is inconsistent with the agreed formulation of the goal in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement process. Accordingly, we dissociate from consensus on that paragraph, and we refer the Assembly to our full explanation of position on the previous iteration of the resolution on the New Partnership for Africa's Development, delivered on 20 February 2023 (see A/77/PV.59), which clarifies our policy positions.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position after the adoption of resolution 78/262.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 65?

*It was so decided.*

**(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa**

**Draft resolution (A/78/L.37)**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.37.

**Mr. Kwoba** (Uganda): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, draft resolution A/78/L.37, entitled "Promotion of durable peace through sustainable development in Africa", which is based on last year's resolution (resolution 77/271) and builds on the key issues of importance for Africa to promote durable peace, with the support of our development partners. It emphasizes the concrete areas needed, particularly in the provision of sufficient support, to address the root causes of conflict in Africa and promote durable peace in Africa during the period of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

The Group welcomes the collective effort to converge the views and concerns of all parties and the flexibility exhibited in formulating consensual language throughout the text of the draft resolution. In that regard, we commend all delegations for their constructive engagement and valuable input, which greatly enriched the draft resolution. We also thank the facilitator, Mr. Ivo Miguel Rubio of Angola, for

his focused efforts in moving the process towards consensus. Our appreciation goes to the coordinators of the draft resolution and to Ms. Isatou Badjie of the Gambia, who negotiated brilliantly on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Group looks forward to the consensual adoption once again of this important draft resolution. We therefore invite other delegations that have not yet co-sponsored draft resolution A/78/L.37 to do so before its adoption.

**The Acting President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.37.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): The present statement is made in the context of rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The present statement will also be distributed to Member States.

Under the terms of paragraphs 19 and 37 of draft resolution A/78/L.37, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to present in the context of the next proposed programme budget a proposal for the establishment of a fellowship for young Africans at United Nations Headquarters in New York to strengthen institutional capacities in policy analysis, design and monitoring, under the coordination of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, and would request the Secretary-General to develop an initiative with the African Peer Review Mechanism on the strengthening of e-governance in Africa through policy innovation and transformative technologies.

The requests contained in paragraphs 19 and 37 of the draft resolution would constitute an addition to the workload of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for 2025 and would entail recurrent additional resource requirements estimated at \$623,200 for 2025. Detailed cost estimates and their underlying assumptions for the requirements are provided in the annex to this statement. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/78/L.37, additional resource requirements, estimated in the amount of \$623,200, under section 11, United Nations system support for the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, would be included in the proposed programme budget for 2025 for the consideration of the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/78/L.37, entitled “Promotion of durable peace through sustainable development in Africa”.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.37?

*Draft resolution A/78/L.37 was adopted (resolution 78/263).*

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

**Ms. Mokhawa** (Botswana): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States.

We value and welcome the consensus adoption of resolutions 78/262 and 78/263, which underscore our collective commitment to the sustainable development and peace of our continent, aligning with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

The adoption of resolution 78/262 is a testament to our shared vision for Africa’s prosperity, emphasizing the importance of international support in achieving the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. We affirm our dedication to eradicating poverty, promoting sustainable economic growth and ensuring environmental sustainability, as cornerstones for a prosperous Africa.

Similarly, resolution 78/263 addresses the critical link between peace and development. It emphasizes a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace through conflict prevention and addressing its root causes, including economic and social disparities, corruption and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. The resolution is a call to action for enhanced cooperation and support, based on African countries’ national priorities and needs, recognizing the capacity of the African Union and regional organizations in leading those efforts.

The Group of African States acknowledges the significant challenges posed by climate change and the ongoing health crises prevalent across the continent. The illicit flow of arms also remains a pressing concern, exacerbating conflicts and hindering development

efforts. We commend the international community’s unwavering support for addressing those challenges, including initiatives aimed at enhancing health-care infrastructure and curbing the proliferation of arms. Those endeavours are crucial for our continent’s resilience and recovery.

We also highlight the importance of international, regional and subregional cooperation in combating terrorism and violent extremism, which pose significant threats to peace, security and development in Africa. The resolutions’ call for support in building and strengthening resilience, State institutions and effective governance systems, particularly in conflict-affected and post-conflict countries, is critical to our collective success.

Adding to our call, we emphasize the urgent need for debt alleviation and the reform of the international financial architecture to ensure fairer borrowing costs and increased access to special drawing rights, vital for Africa’s sustainable development. The African Continental Free Trade Area represents a significant step towards economic growth and sustainable development, requiring robust international support.

Furthermore, in addressing the root causes of conflict and fostering durable peace, the African Group urges the global community to support the realization of the United Nations framework convention on tax, aimed at enhancing fiscal transparency and combating illicit financial flows that undermine Africa’s development and stability.

In conclusion, the African Group is committed to the full and effective implementation of those resolutions. We call on our international partners to continue their support, ensuring that Africa’s development and peacebuilding efforts are adequately financed, sustainable and aligned with our continental priorities. Together, we can achieve a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Africa.

**Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation has always striven to support African States’ desire to boost international cooperation for the development of the continent. We would like to express our gratitude to the coordinators of the negotiations on resolution 78/262, entitled “New Partnership for Africa’s Development: progress in implementation and international support”, and resolution 78/263, entitled “Promotion of durable peace through sustainable development in Africa”.

The Russian Federation is very interested in further comprehensive development and the deepening of political, trade, economic and humanitarian cooperation with all African countries. Relations between Russia and Africa are continuing to develop, and in recent years, they have developed particularly rapidly.

Our countries agree on the idea of defending genuine sovereignty, the right to choose one's own development path in political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres. That desire involves openness and cooperation among free States and peoples who are all equal in their rights.

Therefore, it is no coincidence that the second Russia-Africa summit was held last July with the title "For Peace, Security and Development". It was focused not only on expanding Russian and African strategic cooperation, but also on key topics, such as global and regional stability, ensuring the sustainable development of the continent and strengthening the sovereignty of African States in all its dimensions.

Together we oppose the manipulation of the topics of climate, human rights and the so-called gender agenda for unfavourable political purposes. We do not accept illegal practices such as unilateral coercive sanctions or restrictive measures, which cause significant harm to countries pursuing an independent path forward and create economic problems on a global scale by hindering development.

A lot of summits are taking place now and a lot of promises are being made, but not all of them are being kept. Africa needs reliable economic partners, and it needs to strive for relations on an equal footing and mutually beneficial cooperation. I would like to note that, at the end of last year, Russian-African trade reached a record \$21.2 billion, an increase of 20 per cent compared to 2022. That is one of the clear results of the second Russia-Africa summit, held in the cultural capital of our country.

Russia, represented by its Government, businesses and society, is sincerely interested in further strengthening multifaceted trade, investment and humanitarian links with its esteemed partners in Africa in a way that meets the needs of all our States and contributes to sustainable growth and prosperity.

**Mrs. Atanaszov** (Hungary): With regard to resolution 78/262, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation

and international support", as well as resolution 78/263, entitled "Promotion of durable peace through sustainable development in Africa", Hungary wishes to add some remarks in its national capacity.

Hungary remains committed to promoting sustainable development and lasting peace in Africa and recognizes the need to tackle the multifaceted and serious challenges it faces, including climate change, ongoing conflicts, the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic and so on.

Hungary considers Africa a vital partner with whom close cooperation is essential. Therefore, the Hungarian Government is investing in various development projects in Africa to provide lasting solutions for those in vulnerable situations. Hungary has provided approximately €260 million worth of development resources to African countries over the past five years in the fields of water management, health-care services, infrastructure and so on.

Nevertheless, we would like to take this opportunity to put on record Hungary's position regarding the references to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the twenty-fourth preambular paragraph of resolution 78/262, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support", as well as in operative paragraph 17 of resolution 78/263, entitled "Promotion of durable peace through sustainable development in Africa". I would like to recall that Hungary did not adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and does not participate in its implementation, as it firmly believes that migration has no positive impact on inclusive growth or development. In our view, instead of promoting departures from countries of origin and facilitating migration, we should focus on providing assistance to third countries locally by creating stable and secure conditions, thereby ensuring that people can stay in their homelands in peace and prosperity. It is our firm belief that collective efforts should focus on handling the root causes of migration. For those reasons, Hungary dissociates itself from the twenty-fourth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 17 of those resolutions.

**Mr. Young** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom is committed to supporting conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding in Africa, including through sustainable development. We welcome the efforts of the

African Union (AU) and subregional organizations to tackle the causes of conflict and note the importance of United Nations cooperation with the AU.

Peacekeeping plays a critical role, reducing conflict and increasing stability in Africa. We wish to highlight the significant achievement of Security Council resolution 2719 (2023), agreed in December 2023, which provides a model for future United Nations support to AU peace operations. That Council resolution was a result of many months of careful negotiation led by African colleagues in the Council.

We wish to note that today's resolution 78/263 does not fully reflect the exact language in the Security Council resolution, particularly with regard to the adequate, predictable and sustainable financing model for future AU-led peace support operations and the need for burden-sharing. We note the importance of correctly reflecting the language of Council resolution 2719 (2023).

We look forward to continuing to work with partners in support of durable peace in Africa.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position after the adoption of resolution 78/263.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 65 and agenda item 65 as a whole?

*It was so decided.*

#### **Agenda item 62 (continued)**

#### **The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine**

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

**Mr. Lambrinidis (European Union):** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

Exactly two years ago, when we discussed this agenda item at the Security Council (see S/PV.8974), the Russian delegation was still vehemently denying

Moscow's plan to fully invade and occupy Ukraine. And yet it was precisely during that meeting, during those denials, that Russia launched its full-scale invasion of its neighbour. Two years later, the European Union reiterates its resolute condemnation of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression, which constitutes a manifest violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolutions. Two years later, at least 10,000 civilians have been killed and more than 18,500 injured, not counting the deaths of soldiers on both sides. This war has brought back haunting memories of Europe's history with acts of atrocities, including mass graves and the torture of civilians. The European Union notes with outrage the death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny only days before we marked the second anniversary of the invasion. The ultimate responsibility lies with President Putin and the Russian authorities. It is another sign of the accelerating and systematic repression in Russia. Russia must allow an independent and transparent international investigation immediately.

For two years now, Ukrainians have shown exceptional bravery and resilience in fighting to defend their country, identity, freedom and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We will continue to support Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes, and we will keep supporting them when, for the second consecutive winter, Russia is carrying out massive missile and drone attacks on civilians and critical infrastructure. As it unsuccessfully attempted to do last winter, Russia aims to destroy the morale and resilience of the Ukrainian people this winter, too. It is shameful. We condemn the continued military support for Russia's war of aggression, including by Iran, Belarus and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and we continue to urge all countries to refrain from providing weapons and military equipment for Russia's war of aggression.

The European Union is also gravely concerned about the continued violation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories themselves. The human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine and the commission of inquiry have concluded that Russia has committed a wide range of grave violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine, many of which amount to war crimes. The Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict (A/77/895) lists the Russian army and affiliated armed groups as perpetrators of grave



violations against children. We condemn in the strongest terms Russia's unlawful deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children and other civilians. Russia and Belarus must immediately ensure their safe return.

Russia and its leadership must be held fully accountable for waging a war of aggression against Ukraine, for their other most serious crimes under international law and for the massive damage caused by its war. We reiterate our condemnation and firm rejection of the attempted illegal annexation by Russia of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions and, as in the case of Crimea and Sevastopol, we do not and never will recognize those illegal annexation attempts.

A stark warning: Russia is now, as we speak, preparing "elections" in the occupied territories of Ukraine. Those regions are Ukraine. Russia has no legitimate basis for any such action on Ukrainian territory. We unequivocally reject Russia's illegal annexation attempts, and we urge all United Nations Member States to do the same in line with the Charter of the United Nations and the General Assembly resolutions adopted by an overwhelming majority of Member States.

One year ago, the Assembly called for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in line with the Charter of the United Nations. The European Union supports all meaningful efforts to bring an end to Russia's war. The path to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace is, at the same time, quite frankly, for the aggressor to immediately, completely and unequivocally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and respect its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In conclusion, today's discussion is not just about Ukraine; it is about the fate of each and every country in this Hall. It is about the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States against blatant aggressors. Donetsk is Ukraine, Luhansk is Ukraine, Kherson is Ukraine, Zaporizhzhya is Ukraine and Crimea is Ukraine. The world will not accept Russia's attempted land grab, and the aggressor will be held to account.

**Mr. Kimani** (Kenya): Ukraine is bleeding, and it is a grim reminder that aggression, if left unchecked, brings devastation. The cost is mounting, and too many innocent lives are being torn apart, too many homes are being reduced to rubble and the foundations of global

order are cracking. Kenya grieves with the people of Ukraine, but our hearts also ache for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gaza, Myanmar, the Sahel, the Sudan and many other countries in which war is raging. From all those wars comes a litany of suffering that mocks the promise of the United Nations to never again allow so many to suffer from the ravaging of the powerful. Kenya again condemns the illegal invasion of Ukraine and calls on the Russian Federation to withdraw to the internationally recognized borders. We urge the Security Council to redouble its efforts to find a way to support a mediation that will halt the carnage in Ukraine.

The Security Council very frequently faces criticism for its inaction in multiple situations, and rightfully so. But mere criticism will not halt the weakening of the United Nations. In particular, inaction in having the boldness to use our existing tools and the Summit of the Future this year to transform the United Nations will have dire consequences for us all. This year represents a crossroads. The path that we choose will determine whether the United Nations will fade into irrelevance — as the League of Nations once did — or whether we seize this moment to bolster this institution, restore its influence and strengthen our collective resolve. The enduring fact is that major Powers will always act in their perceived self-interest. To believe otherwise is naive. Yet history offers a harsh lesson: aggression against neighbours or militarily weaker States very often ultimately endangers the aggressor's own security. That is the hard-nosed pragmatism on which our collective peace must rest.

True stability demands a clear-eyed approach that balances self-interest with restraint and seeks cooperation where possible. In the wars raging in Ukraine and Gaza, the major Powers and the entire United Nations face a difficult dilemma. While the wars have distinct causes and involve vastly different interests, they both undermine the United Nations credibility and the fragile trust upon which it depends. If left unchecked, they threaten to fatally weaken the institution, jeopardizing the very influence held by our friends in the permanent membership of the Security Council. It is vital for them to recognize that even in adversarial times such as these, there are points where interests may align. Finding such points of convergence and building agreements upon them, however narrow, is a strategic necessity for us all. The pursuit of outright domination that leaves all parties diminished fuels a

cycle of conflict that will benefit no one in the long run. The major Powers can agree that a protracted war in Ukraine jeopardizes Europe and disrupts the flow of goods that are critical to the lives of the most vulnerable globally. That prolonged instability is not in their interest, including the interest of Russia itself. Therefore, a mediated settlement, which Kenya strongly believes should be in accord with the Charter of the United Nations with regard to Ukraine's sovereignty and standing, serves as a strategic necessity for all parties.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict undermines security in the Middle East and beyond. A two-State solution is the only logical path to lasting peace in the region. Within that framework, the immediate humanitarian crisis in Gaza demands the establishment of a ceasefire based on international law, the unconditional release of all hostages by Hamas and its cessation of terrorism. All human lives hold equal value. The suffering of the Ukrainian and Palestinian peoples must be recognized and addressed. We cannot allow the hierarchies of human worth that enabled history's worst atrocities, from slavery to the Holocaust, to persist in our time. Taking action to save Ukrainian and Palestinian lives is a moral imperative and an affirmation of global equality. Kenya believes that that is possible but that it demands leadership. To the major Powers represented here we say: the path to true and enduring greatness lies not in the fleeting gains of dominance but in creating a world in which all nations, including their own, prosper in lasting security. That is the leadership history demands of them. That is the legacy that all people deserve. We stand ready to forge such a legacy together ambitiously and seek to enshrine it in the Pact of the Future, which we are currently negotiating, so that, finally, we can say that we have made a collective commitment to peace.

**Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar)** (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the member States of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), namely, my country, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The GCC States are deeply concerned about the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian crisis, which marked its two-year anniversary this month, with serious repercussions for the security, humanitarian, health and economic situations throughout the world, especially for efforts to overcome the challenges related to food security

The GCC States reiterate their firm position calling for commitment to the established principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, which govern relations among States. They also call for upholding the international order, based on respect for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and maintaining good-neighbourly relations. In that regard, Article 2 of the Charter requires Member States to settle international disputes by peaceful means and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force. The GCC States reaffirm their support for mediation efforts and dialogue in order to settle the crisis between Russia and Ukraine, establish a ceasefire, reach a peaceful settlement, prioritize dialogue and resolve the conflict through negotiations. The GCC States call on all parties to honour their commitments under international law and international humanitarian law concerning the protection of civilians by refraining from targeting and destroying any civilian infrastructure. They remind the parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law pertaining to prisoners, injured and missing persons, facilitating the unimpeded and safe delivery of humanitarian aid to all those in need, and ensuring respect for medical personnel and humanitarian workers.

In the context of our States' efforts to ensure the implementation of international humanitarian law and strengthen the maintenance of international peace and security, we commend the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting a meeting on the Ukraine crisis in Jeddah in August 2023, which was attended by 40 representatives of States and international security organizations, including the United Nations. With regard to our States' mediation efforts, we commend the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its success in ensuring an exchange between Russia and Ukraine of prisoners of war from five countries on 21 September 2022. We also commend the efforts of my country, the State of Qatar, to mediate between Russia and Ukraine to reunite Ukrainian children with their families in Ukraine. The first operation to that end was carried out in October and the second was carried out in December 2023. My country, the State of Qatar, also succeeded in uniting another group of Ukrainian children with their families in February. We commend the United Arab Emirates for its mediation efforts, which succeeded in bringing about an exchange of prisoners of war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine in January and February.

The GCC States reiterate their commitment to continuing their humanitarian efforts to help those who are in need and are affected by the ongoing crisis between Russia and Ukraine. We stress the need to end the crisis; the only way to avoid further harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure is to end hostilities in a sustainable manner. The parties must take steps to reach a peaceful settlement, in accordance with the Charter.

In conclusion, the GCC States commend the tireless efforts of the United Nations and humanitarian organizations in urgently meeting the humanitarian needs of civilians. We thank the Secretary-General for his continued efforts to respond to the crisis. We also call on the parties concerned to engage in serious negotiations to renew the agreement to facilitate the export of grains through the Black Sea, ensure food supply chains, maintain the stability of food prices and promote food security in a number of countries, especially the developing countries that are in dire need of such crops.

**Mr. Önal (Türkiye):** I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting at a sombre moment, as the war in Ukraine enters its third year.

The war in Ukraine continues to reverberate beyond the battleground, as its human cost and physical destruction increase day by day, with profound global implications for international peace and security. In this war of attrition, a state of relative stalemate prevails on the ground, with no end in sight and little prospect for peace. Yet, particularly at a time like this, we must take stock and reaffirm the fundamental principles that guide our policies. Since day one, Türkiye has adopted a consistent position, standing firmly against the war and rejecting the annexation of Ukrainian territories. It has supported the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political unity of Ukraine since the illegal annexation of Crimea. We immediately implemented the Montreux Convention, thereby limiting potential escalation in the Black Sea. We continue to call for upholding international law and the founding principles of the United Nations, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

After two years of fighting, a clear vision to end the war through diplomacy has yet to be articulated. Türkiye has consistently emphasized the need to develop pathways for a diplomatic solution. It was with

that understanding that we facilitated talks between the parties at an early stage in both Antalya and Istanbul. On the other hand, we have manifested our position by co-sponsoring or voting in favour of all relevant General Assembly resolutions and expressing our support for a just and sustainable peace in Ukraine. We need to recognize that any peace plan requires the engagement of both sides in order to achieve progress in the pursuit of diplomacy. It is high time that we focus our efforts on crafting the contours of a realistic, sustainable and above all a viable peace. The Black Sea Initiative has demonstrated that diplomacy delivers results. Inspired by that initiative, we are now looking into the possibility of a renewed framework that will enable safe commercial navigation in the Black Sea, whose stability remains pivotal to avoid further escalation and the disruption of the global food market.

The endgame for the war should not be a binary choice between a frozen conflict and a forever war. As I said last year from this rostrum, the trajectory of the conflict cannot be decided solely through the dynamics of the battlefield (see A/77/PV.88). We must relinquish the illusion that battlefield dynamics could dictate a mutually acceptable and lasting solution. That is why the diplomatic track must be front and centre. We remain committed to playing an active part in the pursuit of a just and sustainable peace.

**Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (spoke in Spanish):** This past Saturday marked the two-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine's territory, which is a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and an act of aggression and crime under international law. More than 6 million people have fled. More than 20,000 children have been abducted. According to rough estimates, more than 10,000 civilians have been killed. Homes, schools, medical facilities and critical infrastructure have been destroyed. Humanitarian needs continue to grow, thereby exposing those most vulnerable, including the elderly, disabled and displaced persons to enormous risk. Costa Rica supports Ukraine, as well as the peace formula proposed by President Zelenskyy.

In that regard, let me reflect on three points.

First, as we are only a few weeks away from the launch of the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Costa Rica deeply regrets the impact that the war has had on Ukrainian women. They are on the front lines of the conflict, as combatants,

doctors, nurses, volunteers, peace activists, caretakers in their communities and families, internally displaced persons, refugees and — all too often — victims and survivors. According to data from UN-Women, many people working with victims of family-related gender-based violence have reported an increase in such violence and a reduction in available services. Attacks on medical facilities and power grids and a shortage of trained personnel have reduced the available services, which has had a serious impact on maternal health and has led to an increase in the number of premature births. Rape and sexual assault, which are also war crimes, have also been reported in the occupied areas. However, documenting them is difficult for both the authorities and civil society organizations for many reasons, including the lack of trust on the part of the survivors and social stigma.

Against that backdrop, Costa Rica welcomes Ukraine's ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention. We also commend the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for its commitment to establishing the facts and documenting violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine. There can be no peace without justice or justice without accountability, including before the International Criminal Court.

Secondly, Costa Rica would like to underscore the devastating effects of the war on the environment. For the past two years, enormous quantities of fossil fuels have been used, homes have been destroyed, forests have gone up in flames and Ukraine's air, water and soil have been contaminated with toxic substances. That has affected more than 1,2 million hectares of protected land, in violation of international humanitarian law and international environmental law, further leading to a serious crisis in the global food supply chain. For that reason, Costa Rica stresses the outstanding work done by the Ukrainian authorities, civil society and other stakeholders in working to establish helpful precedents and strengthen international mechanisms to respond to, remedy and even prevent environmental crimes and damage related to armed conflicts. In that regard, Costa Rica calls for support for the Coordination Centre on Environmental Damage Assessment in Ukraine, which was launched by the United Nations Development Programme in Ukraine.

Thirdly, Costa Rica is concerned about the impact of the war on our collective security architecture. Over the past two years, global military spending has increased to its historically highest level, during which time nuclear deterrence has also been transformed into nuclear coercion. Far from contributing to global security, nuclear deterrence poses one of the greatest threats, as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons judiciously makes clear. Costa Rica also regrets that since the adoption of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas in Dublin in 2022, Ukrainian civilians have been the victims of those types of weapons, including bombs, missiles, multiple-rocket launchers, improvised explosive devices and others, on a daily basis. Those who survive the effects such weapons face lifelong disabilities and severe psychological trauma. Costa Rica calls for urgently taking action to protect civilians from those indiscriminate weapons.

It is time to end the conflict, followed by the rapid withdrawal of Russian forces. It is also imperative to end the mindset that triggered it. We must reject the vision that prioritizes the use of force to achieve foreign policy goals — a mindset that prioritizes weapons and war over the welfare of people and the planet.

**Mr. De Maesschalck** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium fully supports the statement made by the delegation of the European Union and takes this opportunity to stress the following points.

No matter how hard our Russian colleagues try to shift the blame with regard to this issue, nothing can justify Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which was launched 10 years ago and has been pursued as a full-scale offensive since 24 February 2022. That aggression, which has already caused immeasurable suffering, is in total violation of the Charter of the United Nations. We must bear that undeniable fact in mind in our approach to this meeting on the temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories. Belgium advocates for respect for the same principles in all situations, which is true in the case of Ukraine and elsewhere.

First, it is a matter of respect for the provisions of the Charter. Nothing justifies violating Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The General Assembly has been very clear on the subject.



Consequently, Belgium will never recognize Russia's attempts at annexation.

Secondly, the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure is a cornerstone of international humanitarian law and is of paramount importance in preserving the lives and dignity of people affected by armed conflict. The Russian Federation's incessant attacks on civilians are in total violation of those principles and must cease immediately.

Thirdly, the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice must be implemented, including the immediate suspension of military operations. Moreover, Belgium demands the withdrawal of Russian troops from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. In addressing those repeated violations of the Charter, Belgium calls for ensuring accountability for the crime of aggression committed against Ukraine and countering impunity. That must entail the establishment of an international tribunal, in the absence of which the International Criminal Court has jurisdiction. Belgium urges that particular attention be paid to the fate of children who have been killed, injured or taken away from their parents. All violations must stop. All parties must work to find those missing and reunite them with their families. In that regard, Belgium fully supports the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children. Belgium also fully supports President Zelenskyy's peace formula, which constitutes the only viable road map of the conditions that must be met to achieve peace.

Any process intended to achieve peace must have the broadest possible support within the Assembly. The key players in every region of the world must actively participate. I welcome all the substantial steps that some have already made in that direction.

In conclusion, we therefore call on the Russian Federation to end its aggression against Ukraine; to withdraw immediately, completely and unconditionally all its military forces from Ukrainian territory within the country's internationally recognized borders; and to respect the principles of the Charter, which will underpin a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in line with the resolution (resolution ES-11/6) that the General Assembly adopted one year ago.

**Mrs. Narváez Ojeda (Chile)** (*spoke in Spanish*): As we mark the second anniversary of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine, the parties involved and the international community must

find a way to reach a peaceful solution and establish a ceasefire, with the subsequent withdrawal of Russian troops from the occupied territory. We are disheartened that the unity, independence and sovereignty of Ukraine continue to be violated. We call for respect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine and its internationally recognized borders. In that regard, we believe that the Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Donetsk and Luhansk regions are part of Ukrainian, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We recall that Article 2 of the Charter, which governs international relations, establishes States' obligation to refrain from the use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any State, to settle disputes by peaceful means and fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them. Resolution 3314 (XXIX), of 1974, defines aggression and states in its article 5, paragraph 2, that "[a] war of aggression is a crime against international peace".

As a founding Member of the United Nations and an advocate for full good-faith compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, Chile reaffirms its commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. For that reason, we once again express our unequivocal condemnation of the war crimes perpetrated on Ukrainian territory under the control Russian forces, which have been reported by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine. In its unwavering commitment to respect for international humanitarian law and the international protection of human rights, Chile informed the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court of its decision to join other countries in referring the situation in Ukraine to the Court. The main goal of that initiative is to launch an independent and impartial investigation of events in order to hold accountable and punish those responsible, in accordance with international criminal law.

The effects of the war extend beyond the borders of the countries concerned. That is why we regret Russia's unilateral suspension of the Black Sea Grains Initiative. We have seen that the geopolitical conflict has destabilized food systems and consequently has been a factor in creating food insecurity, spreading economic crises and increasing migration. In addition to underscoring our concern about the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, especially that of women and children who have seen their daily lives affected, we condemn the attacks against civilians and the damage

to critical civilian infrastructure — especially the infrastructure used in the provision of health, education and basic services — in addition to heritage and religious sites. We think it appropriate to underscore that in armed conflict contexts, the belligerent parties must always fulfil their humanitarian obligations and, in particular, must allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians.

Moreover, various United Nations officials have warned that a nuclear catastrophe could occur at some point, with dire consequences. Therefore, the situation in the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant should be monitored in order to ensure that all risks are ruled out. In that connection, we call for compliance with all prohibitions, embargoes and sanctions contained in Security Council resolutions and international treaties governing weapons and ammunition that may be used in this conflict. We call upon the parties to refrain from using — and manufacturing countries to refrain from transferring — prohibited weapons and ammunition.

Once more, we underscore the diplomatic efforts and negotiations that friendly countries are undertaking in order to achieve a peaceful solution to this situation. We strongly call for continued dialogue and understanding with a view to achieving peace and making possible the well-being and security of the population. Lastly, we stress the need to achieve Security Council reform so that decisions regarding the maintenance of international peace and security can be adopted in a timely manner and current geopolitical realities, such as the situation that brings us here today, can be better reflected. That will also contribute to strengthening the capacity of the Organization as a whole.

**Mr. Greco (Italy):** Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

On the second tragic anniversary of Russia's full-scale, unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal invasion of Ukraine, we stand together with the Ukrainian people, more united than ever, to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to our shared values, which are grounded in the rules-based multilateral order. The ongoing aggression is a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a threat to international security and stability. No country can be safe if our common principles and rules are violated with impunity.

The ongoing aggression is also causing dramatic human rights violations, both in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and in Russia. We are

all suffering the consequences of this war — a war that has a domino effect on the entire international community, causing systematic global disruption, with multiple harmful consequences that especially affect the most vulnerable countries in the world.

On this anniversary, Italy condemns in the strongest possible terms the intensification of Russia's campaign of systematic airstrikes against civilian targets and critical infrastructure in Ukraine, along with Russia's complete disregard of the call of the entire membership to put an end to its invasion of Ukraine. Russia must be held accountable for war crimes and for the heavy damage caused by its war of aggression.

Assistance to Ukraine has been a priority for Italy since the beginning of the conflict and throughout 2023. We will continue to provide wide support for Ukraine, including humanitarian aid, and reception measures for refugees, while strongly supporting European Union initiatives. Italy also intends to play an active role in the country's social and economic recovery. A bilateral conference on the reconstruction of Ukraine was organized in Rome in April 2023, and we will host the Ukraine Recovery Conference in 2025. Together, we will lay the foundations for a prosperous and independent Ukraine within our common European family.

Italy also fully supports the humanitarian actors who are working tirelessly to ensure the protection of the population. Rapid, safe and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance for those in need in Ukraine must be guaranteed. As the current Chair of the Mine Action Support Group, Italy is particularly proud of the broad engagement of the international community, together with the United Nations, to support the swift demining of the country. The Group's strong commitment was reaffirmed in an event hosted at United Nations Headquarters on 22 February, which made it possible to build new momentum in the demining of the Ukrainian territory in order to prevent further humanitarian impact, especially on children, and to support agriculture for the benefit of global food security.

We are committed to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Political, military and economic support for Ukraine are some of the key priorities of our presidency of the Group of Seven (G7), and we are determined to maintain that priority for as long as is necessary to reach a just, comprehensive and

lasting peace. Those principles were at the centre of the meeting of leaders of the G7 convened by Italy on 24 February to mark the date of the second anniversary of the aggression, with the participation of the President of Ukraine, President Zelenskyy.

We strongly believe that it is more important than ever to engage the whole international community in contributing to finding a solution to this devastating, senseless war. We need diplomacy, and we also need to take into account the legitimate concerns and the expectations of developing countries, which are bearing the broader consequences of this conflict in terms of disruptions to global supply chains and food security. The instability in trade routes and commodity markets directly affects the countries that rely the most on imported goods. Furthermore, the conflict exacerbates food insecurity by disrupting agricultural production and distribution networks. That disruption, in turn, leads to shortages and price spikes while diverting resources from pressing humanitarian crises in other regions, thereby compounding the plight of vulnerable populations.

The only real way to alleviate the people's suffering in Ukraine and tackle the global humanitarian consequences of Russia's aggression is to put an end to this war. To date, we have not seen evidence that Russia is committed to genuine and sustainable peace efforts. Italy remains committed to collaborating with all sincere partners to ensure the prompt, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the aggressor from the entirety of Ukraine's territory. Italy is ready to do its part to that end. Now is the time to intensify our collective efforts to achieve that goal.

**Mrs. Kamboj (India):** India continues to remain concerned over the situation in Ukraine. We have consistently held the position that no solution can ever come at the cost of human lives. The escalation of hostilities and violence is in no one's interest. We have therefore urged from the outset that all efforts be made to achieve an early cessation of hostilities and that there be an urgent return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy.

We have said so before — the global order that we all subscribe to is based on international law, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States. Engaging in dialogue stands as the sole path to resolving conflicts and differences, no matter

how insurmountable the obstacles to such a course may seem at present. The path to peace requires us to keep all channels of diplomacy open. Thus, sincere and practical engagement among all stakeholders can help promote understanding and reduce the gap between divergent positions. The wholehearted participation and commitment of all stakeholders will be critical to achieving a stable and lasting peace.

A focus on alleviating the consequences of the conflict will be of lasting benefit globally, especially for the most vulnerable societies and economies. India's presidency of the Group of 20 (G20) has ensured that some of those economic pitfalls faced by developing countries were brought to the forefront of the G20 agenda. Through a consensus-based approach, a road map was agreed upon, also providing solutions for countries facing debt stress.

Looking ahead, India's approach to the Ukraine conflict will continue to be people-centric. We are providing both humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and economic support to some of our neighbours in the global South facing economic distress. We must avoid steps that endanger the possibility of dialogue and negotiations. To that end, at the present juncture, as the conflict has continued for two years unabated, we, the comity of Member States, must pause and ask ourselves two pressing questions. First, are we anywhere near a possible acceptable solution? And secondly, if not, why is it that the United Nations system — and particularly its principal organ, the Security Council, mandated primarily to maintain international peace and security — is rendered completely ineffective in the resolution of the ongoing conflict? For multilateralism to be effective, outdated and archaic structures need reform and reinventing, otherwise their credibility will always be on the wane. And unless we fix that systemic flaw, we will continue to be found wanting.

As I conclude, I reiterate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assertion that this is not an era of war. We must remain focused on our shared objectives to achieve our development goals and the partnership and cooperation that we will need for achieving them. As we, the Member States, strive to bring the process of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals back on track and as we endeavour to forge a significant pact for the future, we should aim for more cooperation and not less. It is crucial, therefore, to keep the faith, to keep the conviction in the power of dialogue

and diplomacy, which have always reliably served humankind's progress.

**Mr. Leucă** (Republic of Moldova): The Republic of Moldova aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union and would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

It has already been two years since the start of the unprovoked Russian war of aggression against sovereign Ukraine — an inhuman, unjustified war that continues to ravage the territory of one of our neighbouring countries, taking away too many innocent lives and causing unspeakable suffering and destruction. At the same time, it is mainly thanks to the bravery of Ukrainian men and women that the darkest scenarios have been avoided. We admire the courage of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people and stand in full solidarity with them.

Since the very beginning, the Republic of Moldova has been providing support and the necessary humanitarian assistance to the refugees fleeing the horror of the war. Today we continue to host more than 120,000 Ukrainians who are seeking refuge. Almost one year ago, on 1 March 2023, we launched a temporary protection mechanism providing legal status, better protection and access to social, health and educational services for refugees. Moldova is also actively working with Ukraine, Romania and the European Union on facilitating the transit of goods from and to Ukraine. In 2023 alone, approximately 1 million tons of goods — mostly cereals — transited Moldova to the European Union, and we are working to keep up the dynamics, including by opening new transit routes. We are confident that all those routes will be needed for the reconstruction of Ukraine.

There is no justification for killing civilians or destroying civilian infrastructure. International humanitarian law is crystal clear about that. The consistent blunt violation of international law and international humanitarian law by the Russian military forces and mercenary groups against Ukrainian civilians should not be overlooked. That is of tremendous importance, as too much is at stake, not only in Ukraine but for the wider region, including the Republic of Moldova. We emphasize once again the vital necessity of boosting support for Ukraine, which is just as important now as it was in the earlier stages of the war, and we express our full support for the work of the United Nations to monitor and report

on human rights violations and abuses and its actions towards accountability.

Furthermore, we support the efforts of the international community to set up a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine and we welcome the already established Council of Europe Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine to hold Russia accountable for the war crimes and all violations committed in Ukraine. We call on the Russian Federation to uphold international human rights and international law, including humanitarian law. It must enable full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access through the front lines, including in the non-Government-controlled areas.

The Republic of Moldova has also felt the security consequences of the war in Ukraine. The discovery earlier this month, on 11 and 17 February, of drone debris in southern Moldova, in addition to the several incidents of missile debris landing on our territory since the beginning of the war, serves as another stark reminder of the grim reality that we are facing. My country is also exposed to hybrid threats and various means of pressure. We are committed to further countering that risk in a systemic, legal and peaceful manner. Moreover, we are deeply concerned about the critical situation around the nuclear power plants located near the military action zone. We call on the Russian Federation to abide by the international agreements in the field of strategic weapons and nuclear safety. Such threats are unacceptable and must cease.

In conclusion, the Republic of Moldova stresses the urgent need for a just and durable peace, in line with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. We remain convinced that peace can be achieved. For that to be possible, the Russian Federation must immediately stop its war of aggression, withdraw all its forces and military equipment from Ukrainian territory and respect Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within the internationally recognized borders. To be truly sustainable, the future solution should be based on the peace formula proposed by President Zelenskyy. That comprehensive approach includes all the elements that must be taken into account to achieve a just and durable peace.

**Mr. Galbavy** (Slovakia): Slovakia aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.



I shall begin by reiterating my country's resolute condemnation of Russia's full-fledged war of aggression on Ukraine, which constitutes a manifest violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The General Assembly already overwhelmingly deplored in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in violation of article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter. I would also like to reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, as well as its inherent right of self-defence.

The Russian military invasion two years ago has brought immense suffering and destruction upon Ukraine and its people. It has increased global insecurity and economic instability in the world. It has brought a massive surge of internally displaced persons and refugees in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. We rightfully condemn the disturbing practice of forcible transfers and deportation of Ukrainian children to the Russian Federation and territories under Russian military control. We also condemn the continued military support for Russia's illegal war provided by some other Member States. Furthermore, we urge Russia to grant International Atomic Energy Agency monitors access to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant reactors.

The situation cannot improve unless the war stops. Russia must immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, in line with the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice on 16 March 2022. The Court's most recent decision does not change anything in that regard; the order of the Court remains binding on the parties. Last but not least, due regard should be given to the need to ensure accountability for the most serious crimes under international law and justice for all victims.

Since the beginning of the war, Slovakia has seen a rapid influx of refugees from Ukraine fleeing hostilities and seeking protection. More than 130,000 Ukrainians have applied for temporary protection status in Slovakia, with more than 2 million in transit. The Slovak Republic is committed to continuing to provide temporary refuge for Ukrainian citizens and their families, which includes accommodation, food, health care and access to the labour market. We thank the United Nations agencies for supporting and

complementing Government-led efforts, in particular by helping to fill any gaps in the provision of assistance and services to those refugees.

The risk of further displacement from Ukraine remains high. An estimated 14.6 million people in Ukraine will need humanitarian assistance in 2024, according to the United Nations. Slovakia will continue providing humanitarian support to the Government of Ukraine and to the people inside Ukraine affected by the conflict as well. In addition, Slovakia continues to support Ukraine's European integration and funding needs.

Let me conclude by saying that Slovakia is in favour of all initiatives that would increase the prospects for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. In view of that, we support the key principles and objectives of Ukraine's peace formula, with a view to holding in Switzerland a high-level conference on peace in Ukraine, which will be an opportunity to show broad international support for a viable peace in the country. Ukraine is our neighbour, and we desire nothing less than to see an independent, democratic and prosperous country firmly anchored in the rule of law.

**Mr. Larsen (Australia):** We gather here deeply saddened and outraged. Last Saturday marked two years since Russia launched its full-scale, illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine. Australia mourns the incalculable losses inflicted by Russia on Ukraine's people. We honour their spirit and strength in fighting to defend their nation, freedom and way of life. Australia continues unequivocally to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its ambitions for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. We call on the international community to do the same, in line with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and we reiterate our call for those with influence on Russia to use that influence to end the war.

We must hold Russia to account for its illegal attempted annexation of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhya regions in Ukraine; for its serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as found by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine; and for its deportation of Ukrainian children from regions under temporary Russian control, for which the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants against both the President of Russia and Russia's Commissioner for Children's Rights.

We repeat our calls for Russia immediately to withdraw its forces from Ukraine's internationally recognized territory. Russia's aggression underlines the importance of countries working to maintain peace and to uphold international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. Ukraine's fate matters to us all because we cannot allow might to be right, and any one of us could be next.

Ukraine must be empowered to resolve this war on its own terms. That is why Australia continues to provide important military, economic and emergency humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and has imposed comprehensive measures against Russia in response to its invasion. That is why Australia also continues to condemn those providing support to Russia's illegal war, including Belarus, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Now entering its third year, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a stark reminder of how much we all have to lose if we fail to protect and uphold the Charter of the United Nations and the broader international legal system.

**Ms. Stoeva** (Bulgaria): Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

Two years ago, almost to the day, we were gathered in this Hall to address a reality that defied reason then and defies reason now — the reality that on 24 February 2022, the Russian Federation, a country that is a permanent member of the Security Council, began an unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, in flagrant violation of international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Two years later, the Russian Federation's war of choice is still raging and continues to undermine global security and stability, to cause food insecurity and an energy crisis and to rob millions of their dreams and futures. In two years, this war has caused the death of thousands of civilians and has caused millions to flee and to become refugees or internally displaced. Thousands of children have been illegally deported, and regretfully, there is no end in sight.

From the very beginning, Bulgaria's position has been clear — we condemn in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression and we stand in support of the brave Ukrainian people. Russia must stop this war now, must withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and must fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and

independence within its internationally recognized borders. An overwhelming majority of the General Assembly has also been firm and consistent in its position in support of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in support of Ukraine.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine put to the test the very foundation of international law as we could do nothing to prevent it. However, it is through international law and through accountability that we can redeem ourselves. The actions of the Russian Federation and its leadership cannot go unpunished, and the perpetrators of those actions should be held to account. Justice must be ensured for all victims of executions, torture and maltreatment, gender-based violence, forced deportation and disappearance and other forms of violations of human rights law committed by the Russian Armed Forces or affiliated armed groups. Without accountability, crimes will continue and impunity will persist, undermining the legitimacy of and the prospects for future peace and reconciliation.

The avenue to peace goes through the principle that only Ukraine has the sovereign right to determine when and how to engage in negotiations with the aggressor. That principle is the best safeguard that the future peace that we all strive to achieve will be a just peace for Ukraine — a peace that would reinforce European and global security and the rules-based international order. For that reason, we support the Ukrainian peace formula as the only legitimate format proposed to date for seeking an end to the war and meeting Ukrainian demands.

Ukraine must win this war. A win for Ukraine is a win for international law, for the Charter of the United Nations and for those of us who want to live in peace, prosperity and dignity. We must all ensure that Ukraine does so. Bulgaria will continue to stand with Ukraine and its courageous people for as long as it takes.

**Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore): We are gathered in the General Assembly again to discuss the long-standing issue of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 was and remains a serious blow to international law and to the multilateral system. We are unfortunately entering the third year of war in Ukraine, with rising civilian casualties and with no clear prospects for peace.

We share the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General in his briefing to the Security Council on 23 February (see S/PV.9557), during which he said that

Russia's war in Ukraine had a real risk of escalating and expanding and was undermining the shared norms and values that made us all safer. We also echo the Secretary-General's call for peace in line with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

I wish to make three points.

First, I would like to reiterate Singapore's clear and consistent position that Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Russia's annexation of Ukraine's territories and continued occupation of those territories are clear violations of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Singapore has taken a principled position on the conflict; we have not taken sides, but we have taken a stand, based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and on international law. The sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all countries must be respected and protected. That is a fundamental tenet of the multilateral rules-based system based on the Charter of the United Nations. We therefore continue to categorically reject the claims of historical errors and omissions that were used to justify the invasion and annexation of Ukraine.

Secondly, we are distressed by the worsening humanitarian situation in Ukraine. The deaths of civilians and the damages to civilian infrastructure have increased in recent months. Earlier this month, the United Nations reported a harrowing wave of attacks on Ukraine, resulting in civilian casualties and disruptions to essential civilian services, which was part of a concerning pattern of harm and violations of international humanitarian law. The United Nations has also recorded more than 30,000 civilian casualties, including more than 10,000 killed, since the start of the war in February 2022, with the actual numbers likely to be much higher. We call on all parties to fully comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, to prevent further civilian casualties.

I take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General and to various United Nations agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross for their important efforts to facilitate and provide essential aid to those in need despite the challenging conditions on the ground. The Singapore Government has also provided humanitarian assistance packages to address Ukraine's humanitarian needs.

Thirdly, we regret that despite having held more than 100 meetings on the war in Ukraine, the Security Council remains paralysed. Russia's invasion of Ukraine undermines international peace and security and weakens multilateralism. We are all witness to the war's far-reaching impacts on global food and fuel prices, which has hurt developing countries and vulnerable communities around the world the most. The Security Council has a responsibility to prevent any spillover of the conflict and to avoid an escalation of the war.

We call on Russia to heed the international community's repeated and unambiguous calls to adhere to its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Russia also has an obligation to respect the order of the International Court of Justice to immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its forces from Ukraine's temporarily occupied territories in respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity based on internationally recognized borders.

We encourage all parties to make all efforts towards achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

**Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The war in Ukraine has already claimed hundreds of thousands of victims — combatants and civilians — affecting women and children. Therefore, we urgently need an immediate cessation of hostilities to bring about a frank and direct rapprochement between the parties.

Two years after the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Mexico reiterates its support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and Member States to promote a comprehensive and just peace, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and in line with the principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States.

We regret that to date there is no dialogue between the parties that could pave the way for a negotiated exit from the conflict and put an end to the loss of innocent lives. In that regard, we believe that multilateral efforts in favour of a peaceful solution to the conflict should be oriented towards bringing the countries involved to the negotiating table with a view to restoring the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the withdrawal of the Russian army from Ukrainian territory. We therefore welcome the initiative to hold a global peace summit and hope

that forum will involve the participation of all parties to the conflict.

In the current conditions, we must focus on the protection of civilians, unhindered access for humanitarian assistance and respect for international law, including international humanitarian law and refugee law, in accordance with resolution ES-11/2, sponsored by Mexico and France, on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine.

We also recognize the initiative of Qatar to contribute to the reunification of Ukrainian children with their families. Mexico strongly condemns the deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia, as it may constitute a violation of human rights and international humanitarian law.

While it may seem that, given the increase in geopolitical tensions and challenges, some multilateral frameworks are failing. We must recognize the essential work being done by this Organization to mitigate the effects of the conflict on the Ukrainian population by providing humanitarian assistance to more than 8 million people.

Since the beginning of the conflict, both in the Security Council and in the General Assembly, Mexico has expressed its categorical condemnation of Russia's military invasion of Ukraine simply because it contravenes the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

We recognize the work carried out by the International Criminal Court and the most recent decisions it has issued, and we call for them to be complied with unconditionally. Accountability is undoubtedly a fundamental pillar of the multilateral system, of the rule of law and, therefore, of peace.

Mexico has consistently referred to the importance of paying special attention to the implications of weapons transfers in the conflict. We condemn the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, as well as any use, by any actor and anywhere of cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines, which, because of their excessively harmful nature and indiscriminate effects, have been banned under international law.

Mexico is also deeply concerned about the nuclear rhetoric that has emerged in the context of the war. We unequivocally condemn any threat, explicit or veiled, of the use of nuclear weapons by any actor and under

any circumstance, as it also contravenes international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

As the United Nations, we must expect ourselves to work together in order to lay out a road map for peace based on the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, while fully respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine.

**Mr. Prabowo** (Indonesia): Peace is our *raison d'être*, the Organization's reason for being, as the Secretary-General kindly reminded us earlier this month. Yet conflicts continue, polarization deepens and peace seems to be a far cry in many parts of the world.

In Ukraine, two years have passed since the onset of the war. Death, suffering and destruction persist, and its impacts transcends the borders of the warring nations. The international community continues to look at the United Nations to act and to put an end to the war. We must therefore continue to send a strong and unified message to all parties.

First, we must stop hostilities and establish a sustainable ceasefire. A strong call for the cessation of hostilities must be made and echoed so as to open ways for peace talks.

Secondly, we must uphold the Charter of the United Nations and its principles and ensure adherence to international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. Humanitarian assistance must be given access to all people in need in order to alleviate the suffering of the innocent.

Indonesia, for its part, has actively provided support for Ukraine's recovery. In November we disbursed a grant of \$5 million to reconstruct medical facilities in Ukraine, as part of our commitment to taking tangible action in order to address the crisis.

Thirdly, we must collectively push for dialogue and peaceful solutions. Indonesia is convinced that dialogue is the only way out of this prolonged conflict. These efforts should be supported by the international community playing a pivotal role to create a conducive environment for the resumption of negotiations, including by supporting peace initiatives that address the underlying issues, while refraining from using a zero-sum game approach.

Indonesia underlines that there must not be any double standards in the pursuit of peace — whether in



Ukraine, Gaza or any other conflict situation. Humanity must trump all political interests.

**Ms. Oehri** (Liechtenstein): Today we meet in the context of what has become known as Ukraine week, born out of Russia's full-scale invasion. There is a common misunderstanding that the invasion of Ukraine commenced in February 2022. In fact, it began in 2014, with the invasion of eastern Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea, in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. A decade has passed since, and today is a sombre milestone.

When we look back, it is clear that the international community's response to the annexation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol was inadequate, at best. Resolution 68/262 lacked the necessary clarity and determination to unequivocally condemn the blatantly illegal acts by the Russian Federation and even failed to identify them as acts of aggression. That lukewarm response, far from preventing subsequent acts of aggression was, de facto, a contributing factor to Russia's full-scale invasion two years ago. We must acknowledge the shortcomings of our collective action and recognize the need to respond with greater resolve from the outset. It is our collective responsibility to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter and to react promptly and decisively to aggression.

The resolutions adopted by the Assembly in 2022 and 2023 in the framework of the eleventh emergency special session (ES-11/1 to ES-11/6) demonstrate a more robust and principled approach, and they are testament to the effectiveness of the General Assembly in living up to its role and stepping in when the Security Council is blocked due to the veto. Their implementation remains key, especially in the light of recurring reports of Russia's systematic and serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including sexual and gender-based violence committed against both female and male victims, as well as grave violations perpetrated against Ukrainian children.

Liechtenstein reiterates its steadfast support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We vehemently condemn any attempt to illegally annex parts of Ukraine, including based on the result of sham referendums. Those actions blatantly violate the principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity, enshrined in Article 2 of the United Nations Charter, and are a frontal assault on international order.

Liechtenstein is committed to Ukraine's vision for justice, as expressed by President Zelenskyy on multiple occasions, by holding the most senior political and military leadership of Russia to account for the crime of aggression, on the basis of international law and the internationally agreed definition of the crime of aggression. By ensuring accountability for that supreme crime, we will also live up to the responsibility of our own generation to turn crisis into progress. We will make it clear that waging a blatantly unlawful war of colonial conquest will not go unpunished — whether in Ukraine or elsewhere.

The creation of a special international tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine should therefore be a priority for us all. Together, we can achieve that goal, which will help forge a lasting peace in Ukraine and deter aggressive war-making in future. Liechtenstein will do its part and continues to stand with Ukraine. Steadfast commitment to Ukraine today is more important than ever.

**Mr. Rae** (Canada) (*spoke in French*): For two long years now, the Russian Federation has been waging an illegal war of aggression against its sovereign neighbour, Ukraine. This year also marks the tenth anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, which is part of Ukraine's territory.

Russia's actions in Ukraine are illegal. They are contrary to everything we stand for as members of the United Nations. They must cease immediately, as we, the members of the Assembly, have demanded.

The consequences for Ukraine and its people are catastrophic. More than 10,000 civilians have been killed and millions displaced. The lives of generations of Ukrainians have been changed forever. Recovery will cost billions of dollars over many years.

Moreover, as several representatives stated today, the war has also destabilized the rest of the world. It has worsened food and energy security and triggered severe economic instability. Russia's actions have also emboldened other countries.

(*spoke in English*)

As Russia violates the Charter of the United Nations — which it has, as has been found by the International Court of Justice — it also violates Security Council resolutions by illegally procuring weapons from Iran and North Korea. Those weapons are being used to kill Ukrainian civilians, destroy critical infrastructure

and prolong the war. That demonstrates the depth of Russia's disregard for the rules and the laws that we have all created together.

The death of Alexei Navalny last week in a Russian prison is yet another reminder that the brutality of the Russian dictatorship extends to its own people.

A particularly cruel aspect of Russia's war against Ukraine has been the treatment of Ukrainian children. Russia has killed hundreds of Ukrainian children. It has bombed schools, kindergartens and maternity wards. It has abducted and illegally deported thousands of Ukrainian children. The scale of those crimes is so vast and undeniable that Russia has become the first permanent member of the Security Council ever to be listed by the Secretary-General for committing grave violations against children. President Putin is himself under an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court.

The targeting of Ukrainian children is a clear part of Russia's strategy. Russia would have us all believe that it was forced to do that, that it was forced to invade Ukraine and that the war is the fault of the West. Those are lies, plain and simple, which were thoroughly dispelled by the Foreign Minister of Poland in the Security Council on Friday (see S/PV.9557). I commend Mr. Sikorski's speech to all the members of the General Assembly.

I also want to point out that when the question of who started it was put before the International Court of Justice, the International Court of Justice said emphatically that the justifications that Russia had offered in defence of its aggression did not hold or withstand analysis and that, in fact, Russia should withdraw its troops from Ukraine.

Therefore, let us be clear: Ukraine is the victim; Russia is the aggressor. Russia says that it is resisting neocolonialism when it is itself pursuing classic colonial and imperialistic ambitions. Russia invaded Crimea and seized Ukraine's territory in the east. Russia launched a full-scale invasion against its neighbour and sought to formalize its occupation through sham referendums. It is Russia that has made those choices. The war is Mr. Putin's choice, not ours.

Ukraine has the inherent right under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations to defend itself from those choices. Any other State has the right under Article 51 to provide assistance to Ukraine. It is Ukraine that

has proposed a peace formula in line with the Charter and international law. Canada supports a just and lasting peace with full respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

The choice for all of us is clear. Speaking for my own country, Canada, we will continue to use every tool at our disposal to support Ukraine, because we are a State Member of the United Nations and because we support the Charter. Prime Minister Trudeau was in Kyiv on Saturday and announced an historic strategic security partnership between Canada and Ukraine, which will deepen the already strong ties between our two countries. Our support is as much about Ukraine as it is about fighting for the rules that underpin our world. It is about the future that we all share — a future where might does not make right; where the rule of law is upheld in everything we do; where the difference between truth and lies is clearly understood; and where the institutions that we are building together are always respected.

**Mr. Spasse (Albania):** Two years ago, while the Security Council was gathered to convince the Russian Federation not to attack Ukraine, President Putin ordered the invasion (see S/PV.8974). That act has entered history as a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations by a permanent member of the Security Council. The Russian military aggression against Ukraine was unprovoked and unjustified, as it still is.

What was proclaimed as a special military operation has become a war of attrition. It has caused massive civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. It has forced people to flee their homes seeking safety, protection and assistance. The Russian army has shown a ruthless attitude towards human life. According to the latest report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/77/895), there is a high number of attacks on schools, hospitals and protected personnel, as well as a high number of children killed and maimed attributed to Russian forces and affiliated armed groups.

The Secretary-General has added Russia's military forces and armed proxy groups to his list of shame of parties to armed conflict who commit grave violations against children. In March last year, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for President Putin and the presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights, Maria Lvova-Belova. Several independent

international organizations have reported on sexual violence conducted by the Russian army.

The Russian army is trying not only to occupy land, wipe out physical infrastructure and inflict mass civilian casualties but also to cripple the Ukrainian economy, targeting critical industries. A recent study by the World Bank found that rebuilding Ukraine's economy after the Russian invasion is expected to cost nearly \$486 billion, or 2.8 times Ukraine's expected economic output for 2023.

The consequences of the war go well beyond Europe. Withdrawing from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Russia weaponized food, threatening the lives of millions in vulnerable areas, especially in Africa.

Despite those atrocities, the Ukrainian people and its leadership are showing unbelievable courage, fighting fiercely for their land and their freedom. The members of the international community will continue to support and stand by Ukraine, offering all the assistance needed for their just cause. The accountability process will be an important part of that assistance. The perpetrators of atrocities and damages will be held accountable.

The military aggression against Ukraine is only a piece of the Kremlin's plan to overthrow the international rules-based order and to divide the world into spheres of influence. Whoever thinks that the Kremlin will stop here has not drawn lessons from past decades: Chechnya in 1996; Georgia in 2008; Crimea in 2014; and Ukraine again in 2022. Just look at how Russia is threatening the Baltic States and other neighbouring

countries. There are attempts to destabilize the Western Balkans as well, by inciting separatism and artificial tensions. They will not succeed. They will fail, as they are failing against Ukraine.

President Putin wants to portray the war to the Russian public as an existential conflict. That is far from the truth. It is not an existential war for Russia but a war of choice — the war of one man for his own political survival.

Russia's people can live side by side with Ukraine, while the Kremlin's regime cannot live side by side with a free and democratic country. The tragic death of the Russian opposition leader, Alexei Navalny, while he was under the strict observation of State authorities in prison, best demonstrates the Kremlin's approach to freedom of thought.

We firmly believe that a peaceful solution in line with the Charter of the United Nations, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, is still possible. Albania fully supports the Ukrainian peace formula proposed by President Zelenskyy. In that context, Albania is planning to hold, in the coming days, a high-level summit on Ukraine to explore and discuss concrete steps towards peace.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers this afternoon at 3 p.m. in this Hall.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*