



# General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

**97<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting  
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Official Records

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

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Muhumuza (Uganda), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

## Agenda item 11 (continued)

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

#### Draft resolution (A/78/L.85)

**The Acting President:** I give the floor to the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.85.

**Ms. Horváth (Hungary):** Hungary is delighted to introduce a draft resolution entitled “World Fair Play Day”, as contained in document A/78/L.85, on behalf of a geographically diverse and broad core group consisting of Argentina, Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Qatar, the Philippines, Senegal, Türkiye, Uzbekistan and my own country, Hungary.

We are happy to report that during the past months we have conducted an encompassing and inclusive consultation process with the membership in order to forge consensus around the present draft resolution. Allow me to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to all the Member States for their constructive engagement and valuable inputs throughout the process. We believe that, based on those good-faith negotiations, we have managed to fulfil the task of the facilitator

and to present today a text that enjoys the broadest possible consensus.

Without delving into all the specifics of the draft proposal, we would like to highlight the following three main points from the contents of the draft resolution.

First, as can be inferred from the title, the main aim of the draft resolution is to establish 19 May as World Fair Play Day.

Secondly, the draft resolution invites Member States, as well as a broad range of stakeholders, to cooperate, observe and raise awareness of World Fair Play Day in order to promote the practice of sport in a spirit of friendship, solidarity, tolerance and inclusion, without discrimination.

Thirdly, it recognizes that the spirit of fair play is deeply rooted in the Olympic ideal, and it welcomes the important work carried out by the International Fair Play Committee.

We believe that the promotion of the spirit of fair play and the values it represents, in particular the observance of rules, respect for the opponent and combatting violence and doping, is for the benefit of all. Fair play in sports is able to bridge cultural divides and promote equality and has the potential to show young people that sports can drive social change and community cohesion. Guided by the fact that sport serves as an enabler for sustainable development, we must emphasize that with the draft we seek to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the realization of the 2030 Agenda

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for Sustainable Development. The observance of World Fair Play Day can present a welcome platform to encourage the involvement of a wider range of people interested in sports to take up sports. In doing so, the initiative could directly contribute to the achievement of SDGs 3, 4, 5, 10 and 16 in particular.

In conclusion, we are of the view that respect for the spirit of fair play and the values it represents can serve as a good example, inspiring people around the globe. Fair play fosters mutual respect among participants, teaching us to value and honour each other. Therefore, we ask the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution and to send a loud and clear message of peace, friendship, solidarity, tolerance and inclusion.

**The Acting President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.85.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Perera** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in document A/78/L.85, the following countries have also become sponsors: Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Belarus, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, the Central African Republic, Chad, Croatia, Cuba, Dominica, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Oman, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates and the United Republic of Tanzania.

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

**Mr. Kondratev** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Sport is one of the most important achievements of human civilization and the universal language of human communication. It plays a vital role in the lives of millions of people. It not only promotes physical development, but also provides opportunities for self-

realization, overturning prejudices and stereotypes, developing tolerance and making an invaluable contribution to the fight against discrimination.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to international cooperation in the field of sport, which helps overcome national and religious hatred, promote mutual understanding among peoples and strengthen intercivilizational dialogue and harmony. We are convinced that support for sport, including at the State level, is an important factor in strengthening the world community and affirming the ideals and values of the sports movement throughout the world.

We have gathered today to discuss the agenda item "Sport for development and peace: building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic idea". In that regard, we would like to once again draw attention to the ongoing discrimination against Russian athletes at the instigation of Western countries and international sports structures, primarily the International Olympic Committee. With their actions, they are dividing world sports and achieving disunity among peoples.

The activities of international sports functionaries do not meet the goals and ideals of Olympism. In the run-up to the Summer Olympic Games, which will begin very soon in Paris, the statements made by the city's mayor Anne Hidalgo that Russian and Belarusian athletes are not welcome in Paris deserve special assessment. In that context, the motto of the upcoming Olympics, "Games wide open", makes a derisive mockery of the Olympic ideals.

Russia consistently advocates the development of equal cooperation in sport that is commensurate with the spirit and principles of Olympism, holding honest and fair competitions on a non-discriminatory basis while maintaining equal conditions for the full participation of all countries in the Olympic and Paralympic movements. In that understanding, we found it possible to support draft resolution A/78/L.85.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/78/L.85, entitled "World Fair Play Day".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.85?

*Draft resolution A/78/L.85 was adopted (resolution 78/310)*

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 11?

*It was so decided.*

### **Agenda item 13 (continued)**

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

##### **Draft resolution (A/78/L.86)**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of China to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.86.

**Mr. Fu Cong (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): On behalf of Algeria, Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, Zambia and my own country, China, it is my honour to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.86, "Enhancing international cooperation on capacity-building of artificial intelligence".

At present, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies globally is having a profound impact on the socioeconomic development of all countries and the progress of human civilization. However, people in most countries, especially those in developing countries, have not yet been able to truly access, use or benefit from AI, and the global digital divide is still widening. It is the shared aspiration of the United Nations membership to enhance international cooperation on AI capacity-building, develop and utilize AI on an equal footing and share the fruits of AI knowledge. In view of that, China, together with other members of the core group, has jointly submitted draft resolution A/78/L.86, on enhancing international cooperation on capacity-building of artificial intelligence.

The draft resolution reaffirms the Charter of the United Nations, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and a number of other important political agreements. It also recognizes that the rapid

advancement of AI not only brings new opportunities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but may also pose potential risks and challenges.

The draft resolution stresses that poverty is the greatest global challenge and that the development of AI should pursue the vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society, in line with the principle of artificial intelligence for good for all. AI systems should help promote and protect human rights and should be safe, secure, reliable and trustworthy.

The draft resolution expresses the concern that many developing countries face serious challenges related to the lack of digital infrastructure, connectivity, knowledge, skills, education or human resources, among other things. It calls for bridging the AI and other digital divides between and within countries, and for assisting developing countries in capacity-building by expanding public and private investment, increasing funding and technical assistance, and other means, so as to help those countries achieve the SDGs.

The draft resolution calls on the international community to strengthen international cooperation on AI capacity-building, create a favourable environment — including a fair, open, inclusive, and non-discriminatory business environment — and bolster partnerships to promote innovation and digital transformation.

The draft resolution encourages Member States to incorporate AI capacity-building into their national development plans and strategies, in line with their respective national conditions, and to actively engage in international cooperation in such areas as policy exchanges, knowledge sharing, technology transfer, personnel training and research cooperation so as to enable every country and everyone to share the dividends of AI development.

The draft resolution supports the United Nations in playing a central and coordinating role in international development cooperation; calls on the United Nations system and other international organizations, financial institutions, businesses, civil society, academic and scientific research institutions and other stakeholders to strengthen action-oriented cooperation in AI capacity building; and requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its eightieth session on AI capacity-building.

To summarize, the draft resolution focuses on the theme of capacity-building in artificial intelligence and proposes a number of important action-oriented initiatives to strengthen the means of implementation. It is aimed at helping all countries, especially developing countries, to benefit equally from the advancement of AI and is committed to bridging the digital divide, improving global governance on AI and accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Taking an open, inclusive and transparent approach, China has held four rounds of consultations with Member States, in addition to bilateral exchanges. China has fully listened to and actively taken on board the reasonable views and suggestions of the broad membership. So far, Member States have reached a consensus on the draft resolution as a whole. On behalf of the core group, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all countries that have constructively participated in, followed and supported the process related to the draft resolution, and we look forward to its adoption by consensus. The draft has been sponsored by a large number of countries, and I cordially invite other countries to co-sponsor it before its adoption.

We look forward to taking the adoption of the draft resolution as an opportunity to work with Member States towards active follow-up and implementation of the draft resolution by prioritizing development and following a people-centred approach based on equality, mutual benefit, integrity and innovation. Let us take practical actions to help developing countries strengthen capacity-building in AI, further bridge the AI and other digital divides, and empower sustainable development through AI for good for all, so as to build a community with a shared future for humankind.

**The Acting President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.86.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Perera** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in document A/78/L.86, the following countries have also become sponsors: Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei

Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, The Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Niger, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Yemen.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.86, entitled "Enhancing international cooperation on capacity-building of artificial intelligence".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.86?

*Draft resolution A/78/L.86 was adopted (resolution 78/311).*

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 13.

## Agenda item 124

### Multilingualism

#### Draft resolution (A/78/L.83)

**The Acting President:** Members are reminded that the debate on this item will be held at a later date, to be announced.

I give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.83.



**Mr. Kattanga** (United Republic of Tanzania): It is my honour and privilege to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.83, entitled “World Kiswahili Language Day”, on behalf of the 54 States members of the Group of African States.

Kiswahili is the most prominent language within the Bantu grouping. It originated along the coast of East Africa when Bantu-speaking migrants spreading from Cameroon and Nigeria via the Congo reached the East African littoral. The coastal environment enabled the speakers of the language to spread it all along the coast through business and cultural interactions.

Owing to its geographical position in the Indian Ocean complex, Kiswahili interacted with many foreign languages spoken in the countries of the Indian Ocean and the Middle East, such as Arabic, Persian, Hindi and Turkish. Words from some of those languages, especially those pertaining to commerce and religion, and some fields of secular knowledge were incorporated into Kiswahili and are part of the basic vocabulary. That process enriched the language. Kiswahili has also incorporated borrowings from European languages such as Portuguese, German, Latin, Greek and French.

The draft resolution before us notes that the Kiswahili language is among the 10 most widely spoken languages in the world, with about 200 million speakers, being the lingua franca in many countries within East, Central and Southern Africa, as well as the Middle East. It is Africa’s “liberation language”, as it served as a vehicle for liberation struggles in East and Southern Africa. Kiswahili is taught in more than 150 universities worldwide and used as a medium of instruction in thousands of schools and colleges within and outside Africa. It is also used by world media houses such the BBC, Radio China, Deutsche Welle, Radio Japan, Voice of America and United Nations Radio.

The draft resolution notes that Kiswahili is an official and working language of the African Union, the Southern African Development Community and the East African Community, as well as an important tool in fostering regional integration.

The draft resolution recalls resolution 76/268 of 10 June 2022, on multilingualism, in which it encouraged the Secretary-General to enhance support for non-official languages spoken throughout the world, in a cost-neutral manner, with the aim of informing and raising awareness of the history, culture and use of those languages,

It is in that regard the African Group has submitted the draft resolution, by which the General Assembly would designate 7 July as World Kiswahili Language Day. The draft resolution recognizes the role played by the Kiswahili language in promoting peace, unity, socioeconomic development and cultural diversity, creating awareness and fostering dialogues among peoples. Kiswahili is also regarded as a tool to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The draft resolution contains a decision to proclaim 7 July World Kiswahili Language Day, as I said earlier, in order to promote multilingualism as a core value of the United Nations and to achieve the goals of the United Nations, as set out in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Tanzania and Kenya, on behalf of the African Group and in a spirit of openness and transparency, conducted two rounds of informal consultations, during which we fully engaged with Member States and took on board their constructive proposals. On behalf of the African Group, I wish to thank all delegations that showed interest in and support for the draft resolution. We look forward to its adoption by consensus. We commend and appreciate those that have sponsored the draft resolution and welcome a longer list of sponsors.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for its invaluable support throughout the process, and particularly since it first proclaimed 7 July World Kiswahili Language Day in 2021.

The draft resolution invites all Member States and organizations of the United Nations system, as well as other international and regional organizations and relevant stakeholders, to commemorate World Kiswahili Language Day in an appropriate manner. We therefore invite UNESCO, the United Nations Department of Global Communications and other relevant entities of the United Nations system and all stakeholders to continue to facilitate the observance of World Kiswahili Language Day. The initiative will increase global awareness of the cultural, historical and linguistic richness and importance of Kiswahili.

It is our hope that other Members will join in co-sponsoring this important draft resolution, which we look forward to being adopted by consensus.

**The Acting President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.83.

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

**Mr. Perera** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in document A/78/L.83, the following countries have also become sponsors: Andorra, Belgium, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Gabon, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Maldives, Oman, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand and Uzbekistan.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.83, entitled “World Kiswahili Language Day”.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.83?

*Draft resolution A/78/L.83 was adopted (resolution 78/312).*

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 124.

#### **Agenda item 125 (continued)**

#### **Global health and foreign policy**

##### **Draft resolution (A/78/L.72)**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.72.

**Mr. Alwasil** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank the President of the General Assembly for including this item on the agenda of today’s meeting.

On behalf of the sisterly countries co-sponsors of the draft resolution — the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Morocco, the State of Qatar, the Republic of Yemen and my country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia — I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/78/L.72, entitled “World Conjoined Twins Day”, which proposes proclaiming 24 November of each year as World Conjoined Twins Day.

The draft resolution before the General Assembly addresses the rare medical condition of conjoined twins — two children who are born physically

connected to each other. The condition affects conjoined twins at all stages of their lives, hindering their integration into society and affecting their health and well-being. Moreover, the majority of conjoined twins are unfortunately born dead, according to published academic studies.

The international community has already pledged in the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure good health and well-being for all. Today, six years from 2030, it is of the utmost importance to raise awareness of the condition of conjoined twins and their different needs and to promote regional and international cooperation to help conjoined twins to live a better life and to ensure that they enjoy the best possible levels of health and well-being.

The draft resolution is based on the principles of balance and consensus. It emphasizes the need for all people of all ages to enjoy a healthy life and to enhance their well-being by various means, including by strengthening health-care systems and achieving universal health coverage and all other health-related goals, while leaving no one behind. It also endeavours to reach first those who are furthest behind and to meet the physical and mental health needs of all people, while ensuring respect for human rights and the dignity of the person and taking equality and non-discrimination into account.

The draft resolution on World Conjoined Twins Day is aimed at raising awareness of their condition at all stages of their lives and at all levels, in cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies and other stakeholders, by advocating for their well-being, integrating them into society and promoting their human rights.

The choice of 24 November coincides with the first-known successful surgical operation to separate conjoined twins, which was performed in 1689 A.D. and lasted nearly 10 consecutive days. By selecting that specific date, we recognize the medical breakthrough achieved in separating conjoined twins and the great medical progress made towards improving the lives of those individuals.

At the national level, I stress the priority my country accords to human health, including that of conjoined twins. More than 30 years ago, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched the Saudi Program for Separating Conjoined Twins, which enjoys the support of our wise leadership. The Program receives conjoined

twins from all countries and has carried out more than 60 separations of conjoined twins from 26 countries without discrimination of any kind. In that regard, and on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution, I thank the representatives of the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization for their support in drafting and negotiating the draft resolution. We look forward to its adoption by consensus.

I would also like to thank all missions for their constructive participation during the consultation process, as well as the countries that sponsored the draft resolution for their support of conjoined twins around the world. I urge Member States that have not yet co-sponsored the draft resolution to join the list of sponsors.

**The Acting President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.72.

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

**Mr. Perera** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in document A/78/L.72, the following countries have also become sponsors: Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, the Congo, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Suriname, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will take action on draft resolution A/78/L.72, entitled "World Conjoined Twins Day".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.72?

*Draft resolution A/78/L.72 was adopted (resolution 78/313).*

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

#### **Agenda item 129** (*continued*)

#### **The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity**

##### **Report of the Secretary-General (A/78/901)**

**Mr. Seah** (Singapore): We welcome the appointment of the new Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect, Ms. Mò Bleeker, and look forward to working with her to advance the responsibility to protect (R2P) agenda.

Singapore is a founding member of the Group of Friends of R2P. We joined the Group because we subscribe to the core principle of R2P. Fundamentally, each State has the sovereign right and responsibility to protect its own population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. It is also important that the international community be prepared to take collective action in a timely and decisive manner to help protect populations against such crimes should national authorities manifestly fail to do so.

The issue of R2P has been controversial because it has often been politicized and selectively applied. There has been an erosion of trust around the concept due to such politicization and double standards. What we need is an approach of patient dialogue and informal discussions to build understanding and trust. That is especially important as we embark on negotiations on the pact for the future, which presents an important opportunity to strengthen international cooperation on issues of mutual concern, including the prevention of conflict and atrocity crimes. It is in that context that Singapore would like to restate our understanding of the three pillars of R2P.

First, the primary responsibility for the protection of populations from atrocity crimes lies with States. We have passed the midway point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and we are still far from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The onus is on us to implement those goals and targets, particularly SDG 16 on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies. Singapore is committed to building an inclusive and harmonious society regardless of race or religion and to

guard against fault lines that could emerge from within or without.

Secondly, the international community has a responsibility to support States in their national efforts to improve resilience. We believe that atrocity prevention and the effective implementation of the R2P agenda contribute to fulfilling the Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda and the New Agenda for Peace. The United Nations has an important role to play in conflict prevention through preventive diplomacy and the facilitation of dialogue in response to the risk of atrocity crimes. In particular, the Special Adviser on R2P should perform her primary role of concept development and consensus-building on that divisive topic.

In conclusion, that leads me to the third pillar of R2P, under which the international community has the responsibility to protect should national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations. In that regard, the Security Council has an important role to play. Unfortunately, the veto has been used too often to prevent action to address crimes of atrocity, at the cost of innocent lives. We welcome initiatives calling on members of the Security Council to respond to the risk of atrocity crimes, including the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct and the French-Mexican initiative on the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. The permanent members of the Security Council must make a commitment to stop using the veto to block action aimed at preventing or ending atrocity crimes.

**Mr. Akram** (Pakistan): The international community has adopted a vast array of laws and norms to prevent genocide and other war crimes and crimes against humanity. The international legislation comprises the four Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Their observance and implementation are obligatory on all member parties.

The concept of the responsibility to protect (R2P) was advanced by some States and non-governmental organizations during the preparations for the 2005 World Summit. It was a controversial concept from the outset. In the context of the foreign intervention in Iraq, it generated concerns that the concept was designed to open the possibility of intervention in the internal affairs of States. The 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1), in its paragraphs 138 and 139, consciously restricted the scope of the

R2P concept to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Thus, broadly, the R2P concept merely encapsulated existing international humanitarian law. The primary responsibility for protection rests with the State itself. Only if national authorities are unable or unwilling to do so can the international community take collective action through the Security Council on a case-by-case basis.

That authority already exists under the Genocide Convention. The value addition was its extension to war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as defined in the Geneva Conventions and accompanying international humanitarian law. Unfortunately, from the outset some quarters sought the application of R2P beyond the parameters set out in the Outcome document. It was thought to be applied in situations where there was no compelling evidence that State authorities were unable or unwilling to act. Some epic interventions, for example in Syria and Libya, were partially justified at the time by the R2P concept, mostly with disastrous consequences. In other instances, intervention was unilateral, without the explicit and required endorsement of the Security Council.

What is most tragic is that while used to justify certain interventions, the R2P concept has failed dramatically to prevent and punish genocide and other crimes when those have actually happened. That is most visible in the failure of the international community to respond to the ongoing genocide in Gaza and other parts of the occupied Palestinian territories. Over eight months, Israel's military onslaught has killed almost 40,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children; 86,000 have been injured. Humanitarian supplies have been obstructed and hundreds of humanitarian workers killed. Famine and pestilence stalk Gaza. Indeed, there could be no better illustration of a situation where the international community has the right and, indeed, the urgent obligation to intervene to stop a genocide and accompanying war crimes.

But where are the original, eloquent proponents of R2P? Some have impeded the Security Council from demanding a ceasefire. Some have supplied and continue to supply arms and ammunition to Israel, even after the International Court of Justice asked Israel and its suppliers to stop that plausible genocide. Even Security Council resolution 2735 (2024), wherein Israel is supposed to have accepted a ceasefire plan, remains unimplemented. Israeli military operations continue. The killing goes on. Is this not a situation in which



the Security Council — acting under the Genocide Convention and reinforced by the R2P doctrine, as set out in paragraphs 138 in 139 of the 2005 Outcome document — should intervene to offer protection to the victims. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation has proposed the creation of a protection force. That must be urgently considered by the Security Council.

For the rest, the international community needs to consider how best it can help in preventing other genocides, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. It should take cognizance of situations in which entire populations are being brutalized and genocide is possible. By definition, and by the example of Gaza, it is evident that people under foreign occupation are the most at risk.

Two years ago, the organization Genocide Watch warned of the danger of genocide in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. An army of 900,000 Indian troops has been deployed to suppress the Kashmiris' quest for freedom and self-determination. Since 1989, more than 100,000 Kashmiris have been killed, 20,000 women raped, thousands made to disappear, 13,000 young Kashmiri boys abducted and many of them tortured. All the leaders seeking freedom have been incarcerated for years. Occupied Kashmir is a place where extrajudicial killings, collective punishments, torture and other crimes are a daily reality, and where laws have been imposed to rob Kashmiris of their properties and to induct Hindu settlers from outside to change the demography of the Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir into a Hindu-majority territory. The R2P movement must act now if genocide and ethnic cleansing are to be prevented in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

There is an equally serious danger that has arisen in India from the officially sponsored ideology of Hindutva — an ideology that encourages the establishment of a Hindu-only Bharat. Muslims face systematic, officially sanctioned discrimination, violence and oppression. The law enforcement and judicial machinery is complicit in that oppression. The lynching of Muslims by cow vigilantes and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh thugs goes unpunished. Calls for genocide against Muslims by Hindutva extremists and even the leaders of the country — such as the threat issued last week by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party leader to kill 200,000 Muslims — evoke no punishment. The head of Genocide Watch has also warned that a genocide against the 200 million Muslims in India is possible.

Pakistan's call for cognizance of the situation in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and within India deserves the special attention of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect. We look forward to working with her to advance the objectives of international humanitarian law and the provisions of the 2005 Outcome document.

**Mr. Wennholz** (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the European Union statement and with the statement of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/78/PV.96).

We thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/78/901) and its recommendations. We also thank the Secretary-General's Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect for their important work and warmly welcome the new Special Adviser, Ms. Mò Bleeker. We extend our best wishes for her success and steadfast dedication in addressing the important challenges that lie ahead.

Germany reiterates that the responsibility to protect (R2P), as reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1), serves as a cornerstone of our individual and collective commitment to preventing and responding to the most heinous international crimes. It demands that we, as members of the international community, recognize our duty to safeguard populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Upholding that responsibility requires multifaceted efforts encompassing political, humanitarian and socioeconomic dimensions. Germany reaffirms its firm commitment to R2P as a holistic concept, resting on its three pillars.

We support the work of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect. As early warnings are key to prevention, we strongly encourage the Office of Genocide Prevention and R2P to continuously issue statements on specific country situations and to provide thematic briefings and country analysis at appropriate meetings. We believe that the systematic sharing of information and analysis with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council can contribute significantly to meaningful prevention.

As we approach the twentieth anniversary of the 2005 World Summit, we commend and appreciate this year's report for its focus on taking stock of the implementation of the responsibility to protect. It

is particularly important to highlight environments conducive to atrocity crimes and patterns of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Amidst the highest number of violent conflicts since the Second World War, upholding the international rule of law is paramount. We strongly condemn the deliberate targeting of civilians and urgently call on all parties to armed conflict to cease such actions, in accordance with their obligations under international law. The principles of proportionality and distinction must be rigorously observed at all times. We deeply deplore increased levels of targeting of civilian infrastructure, including places of worship, hospitals, schools and water and energy facilities.

Prioritizing accountability for atrocity crimes is crucial to preventing their recurrence. We emphasize that States bear the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute crimes committed within their jurisdiction. Additionally, we reaffirm our support for international tribunals and hybrid courts, including the International Criminal Court.

In addressing the responsibility to protect and preventing atrocities, we must acknowledge and continue to address the gendered dynamics of those crimes. Women and girls, in all their diversity, are disproportionately affected by mass atrocities, facing specific forms of violence, such as sexual and gender-based violence, forced displacement and systematic discrimination. It is imperative that our response to atrocities be centred on the needs, rights and agency of victims and survivors, particularly women and girls, ensuring their protection, empowerment and meaningful participation at all stages of prevention, response and rebuilding.

Germany stresses the importance of the women and peace and security (WPS) agenda in addressing the gendered dimensions of conflicts and atrocity crimes. By integrating the WPS principles into our policies and programmes, Germany aims to ensure that the rights, needs and perspectives of women and girls are effectively addressed and their voices heard and respected. We also need to be mindful to include young people, as reflected in the youth, peace and security agenda, and to mainstream meaningful youth engagement at the national and international levels.

No society is immune to mass atrocities, as history has shown, including Germany's own past. The report rightfully emphasizes that prevention is crucial and

must be seen as an ongoing process. Early prevention has to begin at the national level and is intrinsically linked to practices of good governance. Effective governance, adherence to the rule of law and the protection of human rights are fundamental pillars that help safeguard societies from descending into violence.

Robust and inclusive public institutions, along with an independent judiciary, are essential in addressing grievances, fostering resilience and preventing destabilization. Civil society, including human rights defenders and the media, plays a vital role in developing and disseminating early warnings to prevent violence and instability.

Societies worldwide, including our own, face unprecedented threats from hate speech, disinformation, discrimination and the incitement of violence, all of which are exacerbated by information technology. By addressing those challenges through our national and European Union policies, Germany reaffirms its commitment to the first pillar of the responsibility to protect. By tackling the underlying factors that contribute to social divisions and marginalization, we aim to create an inclusive and tolerant environment that fosters peace and prevents the emergence of violence.

We believe in the importance of dialogue, the exchange of best practices and a focus on areas where the international community can find much-needed common ground. We therefore commend the efforts of the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect for her thorough and consultative approach to taking stock of the implementation of R2P. The inclusion of regional consultations will ensure that diverse perspectives are heard, fostering a more comprehensive and systematic understanding of the challenges and opportunities in preventing mass atrocities.

Germany fully supports that approach and is looking forward to participating constructively in the consultative process. We believe that through collective effort, shared responsibility and continuous dialogue, we can enhance our collective capacity to protect populations from the gravest of crimes.

In conclusion, let us reaffirm our commitment to the responsibility to protect, acknowledging that our shared humanity calls us to take action.

**Mr. Hollis** (United Kingdom): Let me begin by welcoming the new Special Adviser, M<sup>o</sup> Bleeker, to her role and thanking her and the Secretary-General for the latest report on the responsibility to protect (A/78/901).

As the report highlights, the world is currently facing extremely high levels of conflict, some of which is being conducted in a way that totally disregards the lives of civilians. We have seen increases in conflict-related sexual violence, deaths linked to human-made humanitarian crises and the unlawful targeting of civilian infrastructure. In that context, the international community must strengthen its efforts to prevent mass atrocities and protect populations.

The United Kingdom is unwavering in its commitment to the prevention of and protection from atrocity crimes, and believes that all States can and should take steps to support the responsibility to protect. The report touches on advances that have been made in recent years in that regard, but those are evidently not enough. To encourage further action, I would like to highlight a few recent examples of relevant United Kingdom initiatives:

First, in the Sudan, there have been horrific reports of violence against civilians, some of which may amount to atrocity crimes. Since the outbreak of the conflict over a year ago, the United Kingdom has consistently pushed for the protection of civilians, including through the United Kingdom-drafted Security Council resolution 2736 (2024), adopted last month. The United Kingdom also led efforts at the Human Rights Council to establish the international, independent fact-finding mission to gather and preserve evidence of credible human rights violations and abuses to support future accountability efforts.

Secondly, in Ukraine, United Kingdom funding has helped deploy mobile justice teams to the scenes of potential war crimes, delivered training to over 200 judges on handling war crimes cases, and supplied 30,000 forensic medical kits to police officers investigating conflict-related sexual violence.

Thirdly, as the report highlights, early action is crucial to atrocity prevention efforts. That is why the United Kingdom has strengthened its country- and regional-level monitoring, which has enabled us to escalate risks and plan preventative action. We have also funded an open-source investigations organization to undertake remote monitoring projects in specific geographies where there are risks of atrocities. Not only does that work support our own risk analysis, but some of it is also being shared with justice and accountability organizations.

To conclude, 2025 will mark 20 years since States affirmed their commitment to the responsibility to protect in the World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1). The United Kingdom looks forward to supporting the Special Adviser on R2P as she reviews the successes and challenges of R2P over the past two decades. Understanding what has gone right and what has gone wrong will be critical for our collective understanding of how to better implement atrocity prevention efforts across the United Nations system going forwards.

**Mr. Abushahab** (United Arab Emirates): The United Arab Emirates welcomes today's timely debate following the recent publication of the Secretary-General's report on the responsibility to protect (A/78/901). This provides an opportunity to take stock of the progress we have collectively made on upholding our commitment to the principle of the responsibility to protect (R2P) since the 2005 World Summit.

The United Arab Emirates believes that a State's sovereignty inherently comes with responsibilities towards its population. Every sovereign State has the obligation to safeguard its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. For today's discussion, I would like to outline four ways to help ensure the effective implementation of R2P.

First, we underscore that the Security Council must have the capacity to effectively prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. That is critical to its mandate of maintaining international peace and security and ensuring that Member States fulfil their responsibility to protect. However, we cannot ignore the glaring failure to uphold that commitment in several contexts, particularly in Gaza. In light of that, the United Arab Emirates supports the initiative led by France and Mexico to propose that permanent members of the Security Council pledge to voluntarily refrain from using the veto in cases involving mass atrocities. The United Arab Emirates is also a signatory of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct.

Secondly, R2P requires the development of robust early-warning mechanisms to enhance prevention and protection. It is imperative to identify and address the root causes of conflicts. That involves preventing and countering hate speech, extremism, related forms of intolerance, misinformation and disinformation, and promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence through

comprehensive and whole-of-society approaches. Security Council resolution 2686 (2023), co-penned by the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates, requests that United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions monitor and report on hate speech, racism and acts of extremism. Those are often precursors to the outbreak of conflict.

Thirdly, women play a unique role as agents of change in all aspects of peace and security. It is vital to include women in the implementation of R2P, from early warning and conflict prevention to accountability, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Far more must also be done to protect civilians from sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. It is utterly unacceptable that sexual violence continues to be used as a strategic weapon of war and terrorism, causing grave harm to individuals, particularly women and children, and breaking the social fabric of communities. In preventing and responding to such crimes, we must adopt a survivor-centred approach to ensuring victims' safety, health and right to justice.

Lastly, we reiterate the importance of advancing R2P discussions at both the national and the regional levels. States have the primary responsibility to protect, while regional frameworks offer solutions that are tailored to the specific context. National and regional-level initiatives on R2P can valuably inform international considerations, including through best practices and lessons learned.

**Ms. Beretta Tassano** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this formal debate on the responsibility to protect, which offers an opportunity for Member States to reflect on and assess the efforts made and still to be made to prevent crimes against humanity and mass atrocities.

Before beginning the intervention that I will make in my national capacity, I wish to note that my delegation supports the statement made by the representative of Croatia on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/78/PV.96).

We are witnessing a widespread degradation of respect for civilian lives and an alarming disregard for the norms created to prevent the dangers of armed conflict. The international community has seriously failed to respond to crises in which populations face unspeakable devastation and atrocities. Such situations demonstrate the terrible consequences of inaction. We

must uphold the norms that safeguard humankind. It is imperative that all Member States comply with their obligations under international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law. We condemn all deliberate attacks on civilians, humanitarian workers, United Nations staff, journalists and human rights defenders, as well as critical civilian infrastructure. Such actions have become an alarming trend in conflicts around the world. Member States must uphold the principles that protect humankind, of which the responsibility to protect is an integral part.

In that regard, Uruguay reaffirms its commitment to the responsibility to protect and the principles enshrined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1), particularly in paragraphs 138 and 139, which remain the most effective framework for the international community to come together when vulnerable populations face the threat of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The practical utility and political significance of the responsibility to protect are often questioned, but its consistent implementation depends on the collective will and action of Member States.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It must fulfil its responsibility to protect and ensure timely and decisive action when populations face risks of atrocities. We urge Council members to use existing working methods, such as country situation reports and Arria formula meetings, and support open discussions on the responsibility to protect and the threat of atrocity crimes to enhance the Council's responsiveness to crises in places such as Gaza, Myanmar, the Sudan and Ukraine.

We also express our support for the work of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect and encourage them to share their analysis of developing crises with the membership and to provide recommendations and early warnings on atrocity prevention with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

I would also like to point out that Uruguay, as a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, reaffirms its support for the proposed a code of conduct of the Security Council on resolutions aimed at protecting populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and supports the declaration of



France and Mexico on the voluntary abstention of the use of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council when mass atrocities are committed.

Today, we cannot fail to highlight the importance of the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review, the special procedures and the treaty bodies, as well as the technical assistance provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which play a fundamental role in early warning of risk and detecting factors that can lead to mass atrocities. We also support the mechanisms mandated by the Human Rights Council that collect evidence of atrocities and hold perpetrators accountable.

Accountability, in addition to being an act of justice, plays an effective role in preventing atrocious crimes. Impunity cannot be a shield for those who commit them and States, as those primarily responsible for ensuring that the human rights of their population are respected, must guarantee accountability within their borders and ensure that the perpetrators of crimes that violate the most basic standards of humanity are brought to justice.

In conclusion, Uruguay reaffirms its commitment to the responsibility to protect and advocates that efforts continue to be deepened to advance its proper implementation.

**Ms. Jurečko** (Slovenia): Let me express our appreciation for the convening of this annual debate on the responsibility to protect.

Slovenia aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the European Union and of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/78/PV.96), and we would like to add some remarks in our national capacity.

Slovenia thanks the Secretary-General for his report on the responsibility to protect (A/78/901), which focuses on prevention and protection strategies for atrocity crimes.

The best way to diminish human suffering from atrocities is to prevent conflict from happening in the first place. Slovenia reaffirms its strong commitment to upholding the principle of the responsibility to protect and its strong support for the mandate of the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect. It is our core belief that international cooperation is essential for the survival of humankind. The responsibility to protect is one of those principles that we have co-created and

whose implementation we have continued to promote over the years.

Unfortunately, today we are witnessing a pervasive degradation of respect for civilian lives on a massive scale in too many parts of the world and a trend of disregard for norms and laws. Those trends are extremely worrying. International law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, must be respected. That is non-negotiable. That is what Slovenia believes and strives for, including through our active engagement as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, in order to ensure life-saving actions for populations that are facing atrocity risks.

Slovenia condemns all deliberate attacks against civilians, humanitarian workers, peacekeepers, journalists and human rights defenders, as well as critical civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and water and energy facilities, which are part of a growing trend among parties to armed conflicts around the world. Civilians, including children, our future generations, are dying in conflict zones from hunger because humanitarian aid cannot reach them. Others are suffering and dying because of food insecurity due to climate change, environmental degradation and lack of water. That must change. We must be able to prevent and alleviate the suffering. It is our imperative to stand up for the norms and principles that safeguard humankind, of which the responsibility to protect is an integral part.

Slovenia, as a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, strongly supports and advocates for the code of conduct regarding the use of the veto in Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. We also support the Political Declaration on Suspension of Veto Powers in Cases of Mass Atrocity, launched by France and Mexico, and we encourage other Member States to join those important initiatives.

At a time when so many populations around the world face the threat of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, the principle of the responsibility to protect is as relevant as ever. A survivor-centred and gender-inclusive approach must be central to any atrocity prevention and response. As we near the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the responsibility to protect, preventing human rights abuses and processes that lead to mass atrocity crimes, as well as the responsibility to protect principle, need

to have a much more effective application in real world situations in order to protect populations.

In promoting justice and accountability, we would like to stress Slovenia's support for the International Criminal Court and other accountability mechanisms. The new Ljubljana-The Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of the Crime of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and Other International Crimes can serve as an additional instrument in the toolbox of international criminal law enforcement to bring justice for victims and fight against impunity. International cooperation in prioritizing accountability can prevent the recurrence of atrocity crimes. Therefore, we invite all United Nations Member States to sign and ratify the new Convention.

In conclusion, the Summit of the Future in September will present an opportunity to demonstrate that international cooperation can effectively tackle current and future challenges. In that light, Slovenia believes that responsibility to protect should feature in our discussions. Building trust to secure our future is our way to ensure the reverse of current devastating trends to the better in order to safeguard humankind.

**Ms. Rizk (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*):** My delegation takes note of the Secretary-General's report (A/78/901) on the responsibility to protect and the obligation to prevent atrocity crimes. It is a cause of grave concern that the report notes continued disregard for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, especially given that our world today is witnessing the largest number of violent conflicts since the Second World War, which inevitably entails an increase in the number of civilian victims.

The report addresses the responsibility to respect international humanitarian law, especially with regard to the application of the principles of distinction, proportionality, and caution when launching attacks. It also urges parties to conflicts not to attack civilian installations and facilities or to target civilians on the basis of their identity. That dehumanizes civilians in order to justify targeting them, which represents violations that amount to crimes against humanity, genocide and ethnic cleansing. According to the report, the targeting of civilians has led to widespread waves of forcible displacement.

In that context, and when addressing the responsibility to prevent the occurrence of brutal

crimes, we cannot ignore the crimes to which the Palestinian people are being subjected in their State, which has been occupied since 1967 in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip is currently being subjected to an illegal war waged by Israel against civilians, which has led to the killing of more than 73,000 Palestinian civilians, including 15,000 children, and the wounding of more than 86,000, in addition to the destruction of infrastructure and medical, educational and service facilities, and the targeting and killing of more than 220 United Nations staff members. The Gaza Strip is now on the brink of famine due to the restrictions imposed by Israel on the entry of assistance. All of this is happening as the number of Palestinian deaths in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is on the rise, illegal settlement construction is expanding, Palestinians are being expelled from their lands and their homes are being demolished.

The aforesaid is a mere example of a larger and more comprehensive picture of the crimes being committed against the Palestinian people. The international community should use every tool at its disposal to put an end to those crimes. It is no exaggeration to say that the Secretary-General's report describes those crimes when it addresses the patterns of violations of international humanitarian law, including the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated civilian areas; the targeting of civilian facilities and infrastructure, especially those that are essential to the survival of civilians population; and the destruction of places of worship, homes, schools, hospitals and water and power stations. The international community has been an eye-witness to Israel's deliberate perpetration of those crimes. The occupation has also caused a man-made humanitarian crisis as a record number of people are exposed to hunger due to the lack of access to other basic goods and services.

We demand an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the unhindered delivery of aid to the Gaza Strip and an end to the forced displacement of Palestinians, in implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly and the judgment of the International Court of Justice regarding precautionary measures that Israel, the occupying Power, is obligated to implement.

An end to the illegal war on the Palestinian people would represent a direct and practical application of the principle of the responsibility to protect, which the parties of the international community must promote.

**Mr. Endoni** (Nigeria): I thank the President for convening this plenary meeting, especially at a time when the world is fraught with crises and atrocities that have persisted in many corners, despite efforts to prevent such crimes or to protect populations.

Let me also align Nigeria's delegation with the statement delivered by the representative of Croatia on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/78/PV.96).

Over the years, we have discussed here in the General Assembly the causes of atrocity and have identified hate speech, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, conflict, climate crisis and forced displacement as drivers. We have also again and again recommended strategies to prevent those scourges, including efforts to nip them in the bud.

We wish, however, to draw attention to and emphasize some disturbing developments, including the fact that external interference, long-held biases, double standards and geopolitical rivalry continue to pose a threat to our collective efforts to prevent mass atrocities. That is also why we have millions of people enduring meaningless and avoidable suffering in Gaza, the Sudan and other places, while the international community debates language and condemns the heinous acts of aggressors only in words, reflecting a lack of political will and a betrayal of the founding Charter of the United Nations.

It is in that connection that we deem it necessary to urge Member States to retrace their steps back to the Charter and emphasize the need for we, the peoples of the United Nations, to rededicate ourselves to our *raison d'être* of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.

The Government of Nigeria remains committed to the preservation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including through the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on R2P (A/78/901) and the Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, as applicable. We wish to encourage and extend our support to the Special Advisers of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect and the Prevention of Genocide in the areas

of providing analysis, early warning and best practices on atrocity prevention.

We also urge the five permanent members of the Security Council not to weaponize their veto powers and the entire Security Council to redouble its efforts to uphold its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. We believe that a world devoid of crises and that fosters social harmony is achievable only if we are willing to overlook sentiments dictated by certain geopolitical leanings.

**Mr. Silk** (Marshall Islands): The Marshall Islands aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Croatia on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/78/PV.96).

The protection of people all over the world from atrocity crimes, irrespective of creed, ethnicity and affiliation, is at the heart of the United Nations and anchored in the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations. Those principles are the reason that, as Member States, we have maintained United Nations peace activities and why we have adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the architecture around it. As much as sovereignty remains a basic cornerstone of international law, it must no longer be a stumbling block to the moral obligation of individual States and the international community to protect the most vulnerable from atrocity crimes.

The Marshall Islands agrees with the findings of the recent report of the Secretary-General (A/78/901). The international community needs to address prevention before risks emerge, better recognize that patterns that lead to atrocities are overlooked, and better acknowledge that responses are often too late or polarized and that at times the protection of populations falls too low on the list of priorities. Prevention and protection must be a continuous and ongoing process. Those elements should not be postponed until just before atrocity crimes begin. We cannot all be merely reactive.

As we meet today, we have far too many reminders not only of the failures that led to the adoption of the responsibility to protect (R2P) in 2005, but also of subsequent failures. As a vulnerable nation in a fragile region, we see all too often where a close understanding of complex layers on the ground provides a tapestry of information that distant wire services and media articles cannot grasp. Despite the platform for action at its disposal, the international community is still at high risk of overlooking the voices of vulnerable

populations, including human rights defenders. The world responds too late to have any use of vital information for prevention. We still risk waiting for the fire to ignite.

Violations and abuses of human rights often parallel democratic backsliding. Women's rights are often in regression and space for the free expression of thought is shrinking. What further information do we need before we take action, given the warning signs of what is to come? What more is needed to spur early action to protect when a sovereign State is unwilling or unable to do so or is committing an atrocity itself? I would suggest that this is an issue not only of policy and structure, but also of political will.

The United Nations remains the most uniquely placed multilateral Organization to establish norms and to assist and enforce the protection of civilians. The Outcome document of the 2005 World Summit (resolution 60/1) empowers the United Nations to play that leading role in preventing mass atrocities. The mandate is clear, but the willingness to successfully advance it remains an open question. We acknowledge the link between the Human Rights Council and the Security Council and encourage the further strengthening of those links. Our United Nations institutional mechanisms based in Geneva can play an important role in preventing mass atrocity crimes, including by assisting in better analysing early patterns. In addition, victims and survivors should play an important role in later decision-making efforts to address those crimes.

The unique experience and challenges within our Pacific Islands region provide us with a high sensitivity towards ensuring that the voices of the most vulnerable are not overlooked. The Pacific has in place a number of regional security cooperation arrangements, including the 2018 Boe Declaration on Regional Security of the Pacific Islands Forum. The Boe Declaration recognizes that prevention and collective action are critical to the protection of our people. The Boe Declaration goes even further in recognizing the multidimensional nature of security, cutting across a number of areas, including the environment and human rights.

Despite not only affirming the R2P initiative, the international community plays a powerful role in preventing acts of genocide and other atrocity crimes through a range of institutions and treaties to implement those principles with objective evidence. We have all the tools. The question is and remains: Do we all have the collective courage to use them when they are most

needed? Despite degrees of progress and important pathways forward, much more is needed to turn the RP2 commitment into full preventive action.

**Mr. Tito** (Kiribati): Today we gather to discuss once again, as we have for the past 24 years, how to enhance the vital role of every Government not only in protecting its citizens against atrocities but also in preventing atrocities from occurring. It is sad to note that our United Nations is still searching for a world free from the horrors of war and violence 78 years after its founding fathers created it with a Charter that gave hope to all human beings that never would they suffer again from the horrors and atrocities of war that they had experienced during the two world wars of the past century.

At the outset, I join other delegations in thanking the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect for introducing the report (A/78/901) and for inspiring us to strengthen Governments' ability to protect their populations from crimes of atrocities while at the same time creating measures for preventing atrocities. I also thank the Special Adviser for inviting our views as to the way forward towards the implementation of the principle of the responsibility to protect (R2P).

Kiribati, like other peoples and nature-centred nations of the world, living in harmony and good cooperation with its Pacific neighbours in the warm and loving spirit of the Pacific way, is fortunate to have enjoyed a long history of peace, tranquillity and harmony that was disrupted only for a short period when it was turned into a battleground during the Second World War and subsequently used for nuclear testing and experimentation by two nuclear Powers.

I am pleased to highlight a regional approach to R2P that has worked well for our Pacific region. I thank my colleague from the Marshall Islands for highlighting the Boe Declaration on Regional Security, but I am going to refer to something that happened before the Declaration — a framework that helped our countries overcome the big troubles that they faced. That regional approach is embodied in what is called the Biketawa Declaration, which was adopted by the Pacific Forum leaders at their millennium retreat on Biketawa atoll, in Kiribati, in August 2000. I was chair of that meeting. The Biketawa Declaration provides a mechanism for any member country of the Pacific Islands Forum, confronted with a large-scale disruption of the peace and well-being of its population beyond its



means and capability to address, to notify the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to call on, organize and facilitate the full participation of Forum members to provide whatever assistance they can provide to help the member in distress protect its population from the atrocities of civil disorder and to restore normalcy to its citizens.

Since that regional collaborative approach has worked well in a number of large-scale disruptions over the past two decades in some of our Pacific islands, which were soon brought back to normalcy after the measures contained in the Biketawa Declaration were put in place, I would respectfully recommend that the other regional groupings of the United Nations be encouraged to develop their own R2P plans, as we in the Pacific have done. They could develop something similar to the Biketawa Declaration, which has worked well for the Pacific region, and to encourage other regions of the world to look at what we are doing in the Pacific and modify and reshape it to suit the circumstances of the members of their regions.

Let us not give up. It looks as if we are going to give up, but let us continue searching and working together for a world free of the wars, atrocities, violence and conflicts that harm and destroy human life until such time as the dream of the founding fathers for a better world, as manifested in the Charter of the United Nations, has become a living human reality.

**Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to thank the President for giving us the opportunity to debate this very important issue under item 129 of the agenda of the seventy-eighth session, “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”.

I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his illustrative and detailed report (A/78/901), submitted in accordance with resolution 75/277, in which he presents the progress and challenges of the topic under discussion, concerning which we take due note of the recommendations contained in said report.

Our statement is in line with that made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations (see A/78/PV.96). At the level of our country and on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, I would like to make the following observations.

First of all, while it is categorically true that the General Assembly unanimously adopted the concept of the responsibility to protect in 2005, it is also true that, as noble and altruistic as that decision was, it still does not enjoy global consensus. We believe that if the responsibility to protect is to be more widely accepted in the international community, the scope and parameters of its application must be defined, thereby avoiding confusion with other, existing international principles and norms with the same objectives that are strictly related to the crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Secondly, and referring specifically to the manner of implementation contained in the third pillar of the principle, recent history encourages us to insist that the application of the provisions of the third pillar of the responsibility to protect should not be carried out to satisfy the strategic interests of a country or group of countries in a country or countries in conflict or to justify an armed intervention, as has happened in several countries in our region as well as in others, whose ultimate goal is to provide a cover of legitimacy for the use of force to destabilize or overthrow existing regimes or to create troubled waters for the profit of fishermen — in other words, to take uncontrolled advantage of the natural resources of those countries.

Such unjustified and disproportionate interventions have atrocious long-term consequences that are difficult to repair, not only for the civilian population but for the country, neighbouring countries and the region itself. We only have to look at the agenda of the Security Council and the situation of the countries of the Sahel and part of Central Africa as a result of resolution 1973 (2011) of March 2011. Far from protecting the populations of the region, that resolution, which was adopted with ten votes in favour and five abstentions, including those of Germany, India and Brazil, continues to wreak havoc today. It is necessary and very important that events such as this always be brought to the attention of member countries in order to avoid the commission of such errors in the future.

Thirdly, it must be remembered that the primary responsibility of protecting civilian populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity falls on the State as a fundamental element of national sovereignty. It is the States that, in the exercise of their sovereignty, must ensure the promotion of a peaceful and inclusive society. The fundamental role played by the United Nations in

preventing conflicts and in its tireless support to States during and after armed conflicts through its peacekeeping missions is evident, but there remains a clear need to strengthen and deepen collaboration with regional organizations and neighbouring countries at an early stage in order to build trust, identify risks, share analyses and find viable and depoliticized joint responses based on the real needs of civilians.

Fourthly and lastly, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea shares the view that early warning plays an important role in preventing atrocity crimes and is the basis for early action. In that context, we commend the Continental Early Warning System launched by the African Union as part of the African peace and security architecture, which has significantly contributed to mitigating large-scale political violence across the continent. We also applaud the significant progress that has been made to improve the capacity of the entire United Nations system to prevent and respond to atrocity crimes.

We would like to conclude by reaffirming our position that the international community's responsibility to protect must, on the one hand, be closely linked to preventive diplomacy policies and, on the other, encourage States and the United Nations to continue implementing the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech to combat racism, xenophobia, racial discrimination, illegal exploitation of natural resources and attempts to destabilize Governments, all of which constitute a threat to democratic values, social stability and peace.

**Mr. Pipia** (Georgia): We welcome today's meeting and thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/78/901).

Georgia has aligned itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/78/PV.96). Allow me to add few remarks in my national capacity.

Unfortunately, despite the international community's commitment to preventing and protecting civilians from atrocities, while we debate here people are experiencing unprecedented levels of violence, atrocities and displacement worldwide. We are witnessing a widespread erosion of respect for civilian life and disregard of the norms and principles of international law. Unfortunately, the region I represent has not been spared either.

Since the early 1990s, multiple waves of ethnic cleansing against Georgians have been conducted in the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia. Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, forcefully expelled from both occupied regions, are still deprived by the occupying Power of their fundamental right to return to their homes. Later, as a result of Russia's full-scale military aggression in 2008, Georgia again fell victim to gross violations of international law, including war crimes committed against ethnic Georgians. The investigation into the situation by the International Criminal Court resulted in the issuance of arrest warrants in 2022 for those crimes. Unfortunately, for a third consecutive year the international community has been observing atrocities committed by Russia in Ukraine, resulting in extensive damage to civilian infrastructure that continues to take a heavy toll among innocent civilians.

We fully agree with the findings of the Secretary-General's report that, unfortunately, prevention too often does not begin before risk factors emerge and that discussions on response to risks are too late and fraught with polarization that makes them inefficient. Oftentimes, we have also witnessed how the Security Council, the primary organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, is unable to act decisively due to the fact that the aggressor is a permanent member, its actions also contradicting Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations. Again, the failed attempts to stop Russia's aggression against Ukraine more recently, or to adequately address Russia's aggression against Georgia back in 2008, are clear attestations to the aforementioned.

The prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as well as ensuring accountability for those responsible in order to prevent such crimes from being committed in the future, must continue to be our primary objectives. In that context, the United Nation's role is instrumental. The Human Rights Council and its mechanisms — including the Universal Periodic Review, special procedures and treaty bodies, as well as the technical assistance provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights — all play an essential role in prevention, as well as in providing early warning of imminent risks.

When it comes to addressing ongoing crises, as voiced many times before, we reiterate our support for

the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct and the French-Mexican initiative on veto restraint. We stand for the reaffirmation of the responsibility to protect (R2P) principle in the pact for the future and have voiced that position throughout the discussion on the document.

*Ms. Nabeta (Uganda), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Georgia remains dedicated to further strengthening its national human rights system and attaches high significance to collaboration with existing human rights mechanisms. Unfortunately, our compatriots residing in the Russia-occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia continue to endure persistent violations of their fundamental rights, which include but are not limited to the right to life, the right to liberty and security of person, freedom of movement, the right to health and education in their native language, property rights and freedom from discrimination on ethnic grounds.

In that context, let me recall the decision of the European Court of Human Rights establishing Russia's responsibility, as an occupying Power exercising effective control on the ground, for human rights violations and hampering the return of IDPs and refugees to their homes. Notwithstanding the repeated calls of the international community, both Russia-occupied regions remain closed to international human rights mechanisms, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Those circumstances further aggravate the already dire situation on the ground and heighten the risks of evolving into severe crimes. The resolute stance of the international community is vital to addressing such acute threats.

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate Georgia's dedication to further advancing the objectives of R2P, which are crucial to preventing conflicts, fostering peace and meeting the promise of leaving no one behind.

**Mr. Kim Hyunsoo** (Republic of Korea): Since the responsibility to protect (R2P) was incorporated into the General Assembly's annual agenda, this debate has been pivotal in underscoring the duties of States and the international community, while enhancing our shared understanding of the importance of tangible actions based on R2P. My delegation formally supports maintaining this annual debate on the formal agenda, and now is an opportune moment to contemplate our

actions leading up to 2025, the twentieth anniversary of R2P, as adopted in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

We express our profound gratitude for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and R2P. We commend the Secretary-General's report (A/78/901), which astutely highlights the causes of mass atrocities and enabling factors such as blatant disregard for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, the instrumentalization of new and emerging technologies, climate change and the spread of hate speech and misinformation.

In 2024, the global situation has accentuated those concerns. The escalation of conflict in various regions, coupled with persistent underdevelopment and inequality, has amplified the urgency of protecting vulnerable populations. The complex interplay between mass atrocities and those challenges is evidence as social inequalities, weak institutions and political instability continue to exacerbate conflict. Effective R2P measures must address those realities.

In that regard, Member States and all stakeholders should heed the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report, which places strong emphasis on prevention and protection, including the provision of physical protection as well as actions taken in the legal and humanitarian fields. Among other things, it is imperative that all Member States fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, which are foundational to preventing atrocities and ensuring the protection of a population. Furthermore, we should stress the importance of a gender-sensitive approach in all R2P initiatives. Women and girls often bear the brunt of atrocities. Empowering women and integrating gender perspectives can significantly enhance the effectiveness of our efforts to prevent mass atrocities.

Finally, we must enhance and coordinate early warning mechanisms. Existing systems that signal early warnings about food insecurity, discrimination, human rights violations and impunity should be meticulously analysed through the R2P lens to provide timely and effective responses.

Before closing, I wish to reaffirm the Republic of Korea's unwavering commitment to R2P. As we have consistently stated, sovereignty encompasses the responsibility to protect one's population. It is

incumbent upon each State and the international community to translate the commitment to R2P into tangible actions and meaningful change. However, the Security Council must also continue to act decisively to prevent atrocities and ensure the protection of vulnerable populations, reflecting the collective commitment of the international community to the principles of R2P. As a member of the Security Council, the Republic of Korea will continue to actively collaborate with others to foster the implementation of R2P.

**Mr. Shrier** (United States of America): We welcome the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect, M<sup>o</sup> Bleeker, and wish her every success in her new role.

As we approach the 20-year anniversary of the Assembly's adoption of its landmark World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1), which included the responsibility to protect, many States have fallen far short of their commitments. As the Secretary-General urges in his report (A/78/901), Member States must do much more to address the risks that can create conditions that lead to atrocities. Today, I would like to highlight several conflicts that demand our collective attention.

In Myanmar, the widespread violence perpetrated by the military regime against the people of that country has spiralled, leading to more than 2.7 million people being internally displaced. We welcome United Nations Special Envoy on Myanmar Bishop's intention to pursue a coordinated and coherent United Nations strategy with all relevant stakeholders.

Meanwhile, the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces have plunged the Sudan further into a senseless war, committed atrocities and caused the world's worst displacement crisis. We call on both sides to stop the violence, return to peace talks and allow unhindered humanitarian assistance to flow across conflict lines and borders.

In Ethiopia, the National Defense Force deployed 30,000 troops to the Amhara region despite the expiration of the state of emergency planned for 7 June. We have also heard reports that Tigrayan forces killed and abducted civilians in Raya Alamata. Those actions must cease.

We remain horrified by the abuses perpetrated by Russia's armed forces, officials and affiliated groups, which continue to carry out abductions, forcible transfers or deportations of Ukraine's most vulnerable — its children and persons with disabilities.

The United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Moscow Mechanism have also documented the pervasive use of torture, sexual violence and other crimes against thousands.

In Xinjiang, since at least 2017 Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups have been victims of genocide and other crimes against humanity committed by the People's Republic of China under the direction of the Chinese Communist Party. The United States condemns those ongoing atrocities.

We are all deeply concerned by the harrowing humanitarian situation in Gaza, and working to increase humanitarian access through all channels. We continue to urge the Israeli Government to take all feasible steps to minimize civilian casualties and fully investigate allegations of violations. As Palestinian civilians suffer every day, the best way to durably end the conflict is for Hamas to accept Israel's ceasefire proposal, including the release of all hostages.

In closing, the United States remains committed to upholding its obligations regarding the protection of civilians and to promoting accountability for those who are responsible for atrocities.

**Mr. Sekeris** (Greece): Greece aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/78/PV.96) and would like to add the following in its national capacity.

We welcome this year's report of the Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect (A/78/901), which points to the underlying factors of atrocity crimes, such as human rights violations and abuses. We would also like to express our full support for the work of the Secretary-General's two Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect.

By nature and definition, the responsibility to protect is aimed at protecting populations against atrocity crimes and therefore lies at the heart of multilateralism and our common efforts to promote international peace and security. Given that atrocity crimes are triggered and exacerbated by a practically inexhaustible number of factors, ranging from war, political instability, forced displacement, irregular migration and hate speech to pandemics, gender discrimination, famine, extreme poverty and severe energy shortages, our response should be firm and holistic.



First, prevention remains key to the elimination of such crimes and our primary responsibility through the promotion of international humanitarian law and human rights. Addressing the root causes of conflicts, such as extreme poverty, inequalities and underdevelopment, can serve as an effective preventive mechanism that leaves no space for mass atrocities to happen. In that regard, we need to apply early warning systems, foster transparent governance structures and healthy institutions and enhance social inclusion frameworks.

Moreover, combatting hate speech and promoting tolerance, diversity and full respect for the freedom of opinion and expression, in full alignment with the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, is an indispensable element for the prevention of discrimination, hostility, violence and, ultimately, atrocity crimes. To that end, the protection of human rights defenders, as well as victims and survivors of atrocity crimes, will serve as a testament to our commitment to leaving no one behind.

Although atrocity crimes do not discriminate against their victims, we are particularly concerned about the well-being of the most vulnerable groups, such as children and women. In that regard, we support international tools and mechanisms aimed at their protection, including the Security Council agenda items on women and peace and security and on children and armed conflict.

Last but not least, I would like to emphasize that when we do not succeed in preventing atrocities, the promotion of justice and accountability should be the only alternative in order to make sure that no crime and no perpetrator goes unpunished.

*Mr. Muhumuza (Uganda), Vice-President, returned to the Chair.*

Let me conclude by underlining that as we are negotiating the pact for the future, we need to make sure that we deliver a forward-looking and action-oriented text with a view to the protection of our populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. As an incoming member of the Security Council, I would like to reaffirm Greece's commitment to the responsibility to protect and reassure the Assembly that we are going to work in that direction.

**Mr. Leonidchenko** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We align ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the

Charter of the United Nations (see A/78/PV.96) and, in our national capacity, we consider it important to note the following.

Our delegation does not support holding annual debates on the topic of the responsibility to protect (R2P). These meetings are nothing more than futile attempts to whitewash the tarnished reputation of the concept. Similar messages can be found in the reports of the Secretary-General. In recent years, they have promoted the alleged usefulness of R2P to development and the protection of the rights of children and young people. Tens of thousands of dead Libyans, including children and young people, as well as the destroyed economy of that once prosperous country, illustrate the detachment from reality and the outright absurdity of such a formulation of the issue.

The concept is a tool for the West to interfere in the internal affairs of developing countries. In the best traditions of the so-called rules-based world order, R2P has become a fig leaf covering up the most common aggressions and subsequent looting of weaker countries. It is no better than the previous invention of NATO, humanitarian intervention, which was used for similar purposes: attempts to vindicate the aggression against Yugoslavia, carpet bombing, destruction and the dismemberment of the country.

Many delegations, including ours, have repeatedly noted that after the tragedy in Libya, R2P was dead for them. The entire United Nations system should have come to a similar conclusion. It is all the more surprising to observe, year after year, the persistent attempts of the Special Rapporteurs to revive that Frankenstein. Can anyone seriously believe that delegations have such a short memory?

Whereas previously, the Secretariat had at least asked the opinions of States regarding the topics of future reports on R2P, now it does not do even that. On the contrary, the Special Rapporteur chooses topics at his or her own discretion, carefully avoiding sensitive issues. Naturally, with such an approach, we see no reports on topics that could be of genuine interest to States, for example, on learning the lessons of the Libyan tragedy and measures to prevent the abuse of R2P, reparations for damage and compensation for victims of abuse of the R2P, or how States can protect themselves from R2P.

Incidentally, with respect to the post of Special Rapporteur, we do not know on what basis it even

exists, since its creation was not agreed upon in an intergovernmental format. Moreover, the salary of the person occupying that position is traditionally a symbolic \$1. Accordingly, the work and products of the Special Rapporteur, including the preparation of drafts of the relevant reports of the Secretary-General, are not paid for out of the regular budget of the United Nations. Who pays for that post? As is well known, he who pays the piper calls the tune. In that regard, it comes as no surprise that those reports are overstuffed with pro-Western clichés and directives. The most recent of them, focused on issues of crime prevention, was no exception (A/78/901).

The risks of committing crimes covered by R2P are linked in that document with certain abstract categories such as weak institutions, poor governance and a deficit in the rule of law. I wonder who is authorized, and on what basis, to give such assessments in relation to sovereign States? The report's attempts to link the likelihood of such crimes to a difficult security situation or political instability sounds like blatant doublespeak. For example, on the African continent, none of this is about risk factors in the context of R2P, but a direct consequence of the West's application of that concept in Libya. It was only after that country was destroyed and plundered by NATO that many States of the region faced an unprecedented surge in terrorism and extremism. In addition, since 2011, tens of thousands of destitute migrants, fleeing chaos and devastation, have died at sea, en route to the very countries that were the main culprits of the Libyan tragedy. Thus, R2P itself has become the cause of death and the root of evil and is in no way a solution to problems.

Against that background, it is surprising to see in the Secretary-General's report a section on some kind of physical protection in the context of R2P, where even the infamous no-fly zone is mentioned. However, for some reason the report does not mention the fact that the provisions of Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), on the establishment of such a zone over Libya, were freely interpreted by NATO members as a *carte blanche* to begin the carpet bombing of that country. The report's lengthy discussions of physical protection by regional organizations reek of the humanitarian intervention from the time of NATO's invasion of Yugoslavia. In that regard, we stress that the use of force is regulated by the Charter of the United Nations, which does not mention R2P. R2P, which first saw the light of day in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution

60/1), did not create and, in principle, cannot create an exception to that rule.

Moreover, that document explicitly emphasizes that the primary responsibility for protecting their populations from crimes rests with States, while the international community, playing a subsidiary role, expresses its determination to act collectively but exclusively through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter of the world Organization, in particular Chapter VII.

We know that Western countries, in order to circumvent that restriction and find a pretext for invading Libya, came up with their own, alternative interpretation of R2P, which apparently allows the use of force in the absence of Security Council authorization. Ten years later, those same countries, through their mass intervention in the case of *Ukraine v. Russian Federation* in the International Court of Justice under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, tried to prove that this international treaty supposedly regulated the use of force. In response, the International Court of Justice, in its decision of 2 February, explained in detail to the Ukrainian plaintiffs and their Western support group the completely obvious fact that the Convention does not contain a norm of international law that regulate the use of force. Thus, the findings of the International Court of Justice completely debunk not only the dubious Western concepts of humanitarian intervention, but also their loose interpretations of R2P.

In general, it is important to always remember that R2P is not an international legal institution, but only a political directive, relevant for 2005 but completely discredited by subsequent events. We also see no basis for the activities of the Special Adviser or some multistakeholder consultations to find ways to implement R2P.

In conclusion, I would like to comment on the statements made by other speakers before me.

As regards what the representative of Georgia called the 2008 Russian aggression, that is *de facto* an incorrect assertion. In that regard, I recall the 2009 Tagliavini report to the relevant European Union (EU) commission. The EU can hardly be suspected of any sympathy for the Russian Federation, but the report unequivocally established that the events of August 2008 began with a Georgian attack on Russian peacekeepers. In response, our peacekeepers did their

duty, not scatter like some of their colleagues. They prevented yet another wave of the ethnic cleansing that our colleague referred to in the context of the events that started in the 1990s. They did precisely what was asked of them: took an unequal fight, having only small arms against tanks. Of course, attacks on peacekeepers justify the use of force in self-defense, which was done. Let us not confuse the concepts.

The statement made by the United States representative in reviewing all the various situations in the world was interesting, but the perverted logic he used in claiming that the evacuation of children from a conflict zone was tantamount to deportation was something that only the United States delegation could come up with, other than the so-called International Criminal Court and its Prosecutor. Everybody else understands what was done and why it was done. Since the United States delegation is so concerned about children being evacuated from areas of conflict in Ukraine, I recall that it is the country of that very same delegation that supplied different kinds of weapons, including heavy bombs that have been used in Gaza, an extremely densely populated area, resulting in the highest child mortality rate in history. I therefore really do not believe that it is up to the United States delegation to talk about taking care of children.

**Mr. Moriko** (Cote d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting and to congratulate Secretary-General António Guterres on his report, entitled "Responsibility to protect: the commitment to prevent and protect populations from atrocity crimes" (A/78/901).

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Croatia on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/78/PV.96) and would like, in its national capacity, to add the following.

This year's debate is taking place in a volatile security context in which populations living in conflict zones are facing alarming levels of violence, mass atrocities and displacement. Despite the international community's ever-renewed commitment to preventing and protecting civilians from atrocity crimes, we are unfortunately seeing a situation of almost generalized deterioration in respect for their lives in times of conflict, as well as disregard for international legal instruments developed with a view to preventing the dangers of armed conflict.

That environment, which fosters permanent fear and uncertain futures for populations, is not sustainable. That is why my delegation believes that it is necessary to strengthen international cooperation in order to meet the challenges of protecting civilians by giving priority to respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law at the national, regional and international levels. In that regard, I believe that it is useful to emphasize the timeliness of the theme of this year's report, which provides an opportunity to assess the current state of prevention of mass atrocities and protection against crimes, and to propose ways in which the responsibility to protect can serve as a framework for action to strengthen prevention and protection.

The year 2025 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the 2005 World Summit. Over these two decades, tangible progress has been made in understanding the risk factors, root causes and dynamics underlying atrocity crimes. Relevant information on the risks of atrocity crimes, ways to prevent them and institutional capacities to protect vulnerable populations and ensure accountability is also available.

However, the international community has not been able to prevent the commission of atrocity crimes in some contexts. We are of the view that the problem lies not in the commitment to the principle of the responsibility to protect per se, but rather in the implementation of that commitment in practice. Indeed, the risks of atrocity crimes are often not identified in time, and when they are, the level of priority given to policies aimed at protecting vulnerable populations may be lower.

The difficult times that humankind is experiencing today are also those during which the practical utility and political significance of the responsibility to protect are often called into question, while the proper application of the principle depends on the will of Member States. That is why my country reiterates its firm commitment to the principle of the responsibility to protect and invites all Member States to work together to provide adequate responses to the situation of populations exposed to atrocity crimes.

In that perspective, we must build together peaceful and inclusive societies, free from the scourge of fear. That goal can thrive only by addressing the root causes of atrocities, including poverty, systemic discrimination, lack of education, economic and gender inequality, social exclusion, lack of good governance and corruption. As those factors can generate tensions

and violence among communities, development strategies aimed at addressing those root causes should integrate the principle of the responsibility to protect to prevent the risks of violence and atrocities.

**Mr. Gusman** (Azerbaijan): I would like to thank the President for convening this meeting and the Secretary-General for the report (A/78/901).

Since the last debate on this agenda item (see A/77/PV.83 *et seq.*), armed conflicts continue to be characterized by hate-driven violence, high levels of civilian casualties and lack of accountability for serious violations of international law. States are under the obligation to prevent such violations and to prosecute and punish the perpetrators. Accountability is an essential tool in the prevention of violations and an important constituent on the path to genuine reconciliation and towards a more peaceful, just and inclusive future.

Unfortunately, during the most recent reporting period, dishonest manipulations around legal concepts and norms have continued, sometimes even under the cover of the atrocity crimes prevention agenda. It is important to emphasize that relevant legal instruments must be regarded and implemented in accordance with their objectives and purposes, and not abused as tools for promoting fabricated slanderous narratives. It would be pertinent to recall that false accusations may constitute internationally wrongful acts.

In that context, we are once again obliged to recall the simple fact that, in flagrant violation of international law, more than 250,000 Azerbaijanis were forced to flee their homes in Armenia as a result of mass expulsion, and that to this day Armenia has prevented their return. Following that, Armenia unleashed a full-scale aggression, resulting in the occupation of the Garabagh region and seven other adjacent regions of Azerbaijan for nearly 30 years. A direct result of that occupation was the ethnic cleansing of more than 700,000 Azerbaijanis from those territories, the killing of tens of thousands of civilians, the deprivation of refugees and internally displaced persons of their property, the destruction or misappropriation of Azerbaijan's cultural heritage and the looting of natural resources. Not only has Armenia taken no steps to investigate and prosecute those crimes, but it also continues to venerate and glorify the perpetrators as national heroes. Armenia further refuses to account for some 4,000 missing Azerbaijani nationals and to provide information on the locations of mass graves in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan.

The use of landmines, especially in populated civilian areas, is explicitly listed as a risk factor in the Secretary-General's report, and yet Armenia continues to withhold information about the more than 1 million landmines it planted in Azerbaijan. Those landmines continue to pose a daily threat to peaceful lives. As recently as last week, an employee of the demining agency was killed by a landmine and several others were gravely injured. As a result, the total number of victims of landmines planted by Armenia has risen to 369 persons, including women and children, since 2020 alone.

The continued references in Armenia's statements to non-existent or distorted names of settlements in Azerbaijan are in clear contradiction with both the international legal order and the ongoing process of normalizing relations between our States, at the core of which is mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Therefore, further progress towards achieving lasting peace and stability in the region requires that Armenia cease any actions that sabotage the normalization process and strictly abide by its international obligations. Azerbaijan is committed to continuing its efforts to eliminate the devastating consequences of the war, promote conflict prevention, justice and accountability, advance the results-oriented normalization process and build sustainable peace in the region.

The responsibility to protect, borne out of the tragedies of the past, remains central to the prevention of the most serious crimes. It is important that the relevant stakeholders evaluate claims with extreme caution and great reserve, rely on evidence that is fully conclusive and obtained by skilled examination, and be able to distinguish between genuine claims and deceptions, while at the same time affirming a State's right and responsibility to protect its people and ensure criminal liability for serious breaches of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

**Ms. Güç** (Türkiye): I would like to begin by expressing our gratitude to the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser for his sixteenth report on the responsibility to protect (A/78/901) and underlining the significance of these annual debates.

The adoption of the concept of the responsibility to protect by Member States at the 2005 World Summit was a significant milestone. However, unfortunately, as we approach the twentieth anniversary of resolution 60/1, grave atrocities, human rights violations



and humanitarian crises persist globally. Recent developments all over the world, including the large-scale human suffering and excessive civilian casualties in Gaza, once again prove the validity of the concerns of many States about the just and equal application of the concept of the responsibility to protect. The responsibility to protect is a global political commitment based on the fundamental concept of “never again”.

However, today, in the occupied Palestinian territory, one of the worst tragedies humankind has ever seen has been unfolding before our eyes. Yet many still look the other way and watch the systematic breach of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law. Responsible members of the international community rightly seek a solution in the law, as there is a lawsuit before the International Court of Justice regarding the violation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by Israel, in which Türkiye has also joined, together with many other countries, in defence of law, justice and morality. Nevertheless, neither the Security Council’s resolutions nor the preliminary measures ordered by the International Court of Justice have been implemented.

We believe that the legal definition of the responsibility to protect should be based on the largest possible consensus of the international community. The viewpoints of all United Nations Member States should be taken into consideration. Arbitrary and discriminatory practices should be avoided and different responses to similar crises should not be allowed. The responsibility to protect is not and should not become a tool or an excuse for intervening in the internal affairs of States, either.

The international treaties addressing the crime of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity provide an authoritative and comprehensive legal framework for the prevention and punishment of those crimes. However, there is still a lack of a widely accepted legal definition of the responsibility to protect. After defining the norm, the rules and procedures on how it needs to be applied should also be clearly established. That task should be carried out not to reinterpret or renegotiate the well-established principles of international law and the existing legal framework on the crime of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, but to

find ways of implementing them in a legally sound and consistent manner.

The responsibilities under the doctrine of the responsibility to protect must be carefully calibrated. We closely follow and value all efforts for the prevention of genocide, which constitutes an obligation of the international community. It should nevertheless be noted that genocide is a clearly defined crime with specific conditions of proof. The 1948 Convention defines what genocide is and how it can be ascertained; only a competent court can decide what constitutes genocide.

Therefore, we carefully took note of the key challenges to an efficient international response to the risk of atrocity crimes highlighted in the report, especially the challenge of discussions on response being too late and fraught with polarization. We also consider the challenges listed in section III of the Secretary-General’s report, with respect to the contributing factors to the failure in realizing the promise of the responsibility to protect, to be of highest significance.

We welcome the fact that the report highlights the key aspects of effective prevention and protection and encourages States, regional bodies and United Nations entities to assess and further develop their capacities to prevent mass atrocities. Yet, when preventive efforts fail, United Nations bodies must intervene to fulfil their duties as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations. We would like to emphasize in particular the responsibility of the Security Council to act in situations of mass atrocities.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of my country to the legal framework for the prevention and punishment of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, which we believe every Member State should implement in an objective and impartial manner.

**The Acting President:** Several delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind them that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Ms. Bhat (India):** I shall be brief.

We have taken note of the Secretary-General’s report (A/78/901) and its contents. India’s consistent position on the responsibility to protect (R2P) is well known. The responsibility to protect its population is

one of the foremost responsibilities of every State. The right to life is one of the rights from which no derogation is permitted under any circumstance.

Decades of practice have shown that the responsibility to protect cannot be used to address all violations of human rights and humanitarian law. Rather, it must be confined to the four identified crimes, that is, genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Further practice has also shown that the default response of the international community can neither be recourse to measures under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, nor can it be seen as a pretext for humanitarian intervention. The imposition of universal jurisdiction on alleged acts of atrocities committed in the territory of a sovereign State needs to be avoided as well.

Terrorism today is the greatest threat faced by humankind. It exacerbates social tensions, pushing societies towards instability and violence. Having suffered the scourge of cross-border terrorism for decades, in which thousands of innocent civilians have lost their lives, India has always been at the forefront of global counter-terrorism efforts. The international community should stand firm in its opposition to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and reject any attempt to provide any justification for terrorist acts.

One delegation has made it a habit of abusing the sanctity of every United Nations forum by spreading falsehoods. For a country that is encouraging sectarian violence against minorities, sponsoring cross-border terrorism, harbouring a deep sense of insecurity and orchestrated hatred for India and our secular credentials, we expect nothing new from that delegation. The representative of Pakistan made a number of futile and unsubstantiated allegations against India, including in relation to Jammu and Kashmir. Those do not merit a response as they pertain to matters internal to India. However, my delegation makes it clear that the entire union territory of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, including the territories under illegal occupation by Pakistan, are and will always remain an integral part of India.

A serial violator of minority rights commenting on the treatment of minorities in another nation is nothing but absurd. The world has been witness to the systemic persecution of minorities, including Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Ahmadiyya, by Pakistan. We call on Pakistan to focus on the safety, security and well-being

of its minority communities instead of engaging in alarmist propaganda.

Today, we are discussing the Secretary-General's report on R2P and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The irony is totally lost on the representative of Pakistan, given that country's shameful history of committing genocide in what was then East Pakistan and what is now Bangladesh more than 50 ago, for which it has not once even offered a modicum of an apology. Let us not forget where Al Qaeda terrorist Osama bin Laden was found. As an epicentre of terrorism, Pakistan has spurned calls for a global ceasefire by sponsoring cross-border terrorism. It has broken each and every principle the United Nations stands for.

**Mr. Sun Zhiqiang (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in response to the statement made by the United States representative.

In his statement, the United States representative read out a list criticizing many countries and regions. Pretending that the United States cares about a specific region or country is ridiculous hypocrisy. We remind the United States that it should not forget Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and many other countries that have been occupied or aggressed by the United States. No one can forget how many people have been killed and how many tragedies it has unleashed on Earth. We cannot forget the unilateral measures undertaken by the United States that have resulted humanitarian disasters.

In his statement, the United States representative spread misinformation about Xinjiang, in China. China strongly rejects that. The so-called genocide allegation is nothing but a lie propagated by the United States. Currently, the people of Xinjiang are enjoying heightened happiness and peace in a situation of contentment and prosperity. Only the United States plays the ostrich, burying its head in the sand and spreading lies about Xinjiang. It has no interest in the people of Xinjiang but merely uses them as a pretext to suppress China.

I wish to inform the United States that accusations against other countries cannot hide its own poor record. Spreading lies and disinformation cannot fool international opinion. If the United States is truly interested in protecting human rights, one thing it can do is change its policy of protecting one side in the

Palestinian-Israeli conflict and try to make a genuine effort for a lasting ceasefire in Gaza.

**Mrs. Ijaz (Pakistan):** My delegation is taking the floor to respond to the inflammatory remarks just made by the representative of India. That delegation once again refuses to confront the facts presented by my delegation about India's abysmal treatment of minorities, opting instead to present fabricated assertions to the Assembly. It is rather ironic for a country to give sermons to others when its minorities, including Christians, Muslims and Dalits, are publicly lynched at the hands of Hindutva zealots on a daily basis.

Pakistan condemns any incident of religious violence within our borders. Our leadership swiftly intervenes, condemns attacks and ensures swift justice for the perpetrators. In stark contrast, India's leadership appears bent on escalating criminal tensions. Can the representative of India justify the recent incident in which a Bharatiya Janata Party leader openly threatened to slaughter 200,000 Muslims? We have witnessed India's leadership's unabashed use of anti-Muslim rhetoric for political gain, including its Prime Minister calling Muslims "infiltrators" during one of his campaign speeches. Moreover, Hindu priests have openly called for the genocide of Muslim minorities in India.

Normally, if such incidents occur in any country, swift and scrupulous action is taken to create deterrence. However, India stands out because the Government not only endorses but is complicit in those serious crimes. There is a glaring lack of political will to curb such atrocities in India, unlike Pakistan's unequivocal stance in similar circumstances. That record against minorities in India has alarmed United Nations human rights experts, which issued a statement in March earlier this year stating,

"We are alarmed by continuing reports of attacks on religious, racial and ethnic minorities, on women and girls on intersecting grounds, and on civil society, including human rights defenders and the media in India".

We would like to remind the Indian delegation that instead of making vitriolic remarks and fabricating information against my country with no evidence, it should better address the concerns being consistently raised by the United Nations experts and reverse the dangerous Islamophobic trend in its country.

The representative of India referred to the events of 1971, which were a matter not of genocide but of India's foreign aggression and attack on the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan. I would refer the Indian representative to resolution 303 (IV), of December 1949, which upheld the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan against foreign invasion.

As far as terrorism is concerned, it is rather ironic for a country that uses terrorism as an instrument of State policy against its neighbours to point fingers at others. It is surprising to see that country lecturing on terrorism when it is itself a State sponsor of terrorism, running a global franchise of assassination campaigns, and has abused a sanctions regime in the Security Council to prevent the listing of its nationals involved in various terrorist activities.

India knows all too well that its illegal annexation will never be accepted by the occupied people of Jammu and Kashmir. However, it stubbornly refuses to acknowledge the simple fact that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is neither a constitutional nor an internal matter of India. It has always been and remains an internationally recognized dispute under the relevant Security Council resolutions. It cannot be wished away by India through legal acrobatics. Considering that actions taken by India in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir transgress all limits of legality, human rights and humanitarian norms, the international community must work towards alleviating the suffering of the people of Jammu and Kashmir by granting them their right to self-determination, as enshrined by the Charter of the United Nations and numerous Security Council resolutions.

*The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.*