



General Assembly

Seventy-eighth session

102nd plenary meeting
Thursday, 1 August 2024, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

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

Agenda items 13 and 117 (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**

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/78/L.100)

Draft decision (A/78/L.101)

The President: Before proceeding, I would like to make a technical update to preambular paragraph 1 of the draft decision, by replacing the two underlined spaces in the fifth line of the text with the symbol and the adoption date of the resolution on the scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level plenary meeting on addressing the existential threats posed by sea level rise, to be adopted. Thus, the fifth line of the draft decision would read as follows:

“recalling also its resolution 78/319 of 1 August 2024, on the scope, modalities and format”.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/78/L.100 and draft decision A/78/L.101, as orally revised.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. De Miranda (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I will first deliver an oral statement of programme budget implications in connection with draft resolution A/78/L.100 and draft decision A/78/L.101, as orally revised. The oral statements will be followed by an oral statement of the meeting scheduling implications of draft decision A/78/L.101, as orally revised.

The present oral statement is made in the context of rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. It has been distributed to Member States.

In draft resolution A/78/L.100, the Assembly sets forth the scope, modalities, format and organization of a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing the existential threats posed by sea level rise, to be held in New York on 25 September 2024. It should be recalled that, in its decision 78/544, the Assembly decided to convene a one-day high-level meeting of the plenary of the General Assembly, within existing resources. At that time, the Secretariat took note of the decision by the General Assembly to implement the new mandate within existing budgetary resources. The Secretariat wishes to reiterate to the General Assembly that its ability to implement the new mandate will depend on the availability of adequate cash resources.

I now turn to the oral statement of programme budget implications in connection with draft decision A/78/L.101, as orally revised. The present statement is made in the context of rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. It has been distributed to Member States.

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



Under the terms of operative paragraphs 2 and 3 of the draft decision, the General Assembly would decide: (a) to request the Secretary-General to prepare a report, including by inviting contributions from Member States, to be submitted near the conclusion of the seventy-ninth session or early in the eightieth session of the General Assembly, to provide information on challenges related to sea level rise and on ways and approaches to address sea level rise; and (b) to request the President of the General Assembly to organize a one-day high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly no later than the last day of the general debate of the Assembly at its eighty-first session, to further consider sea level rise, which will result, without setting a precedent for similar meetings, in a concise, action-oriented and intergovernmentally negotiated declaration agreed by consensus.

The requests contained in operative paragraphs 2 and 3 of the draft decision would constitute an addition to the workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Information and Communications Technology in 2025 and 2026 and entail additional resource requirements in the amount of \$43,200 for 2025 and \$38,900 for 2026. Detailed cost estimates and their underlying assumptions for the requirements are provided in the annex to this statement. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft decision A/78/L.101, as orally revised, additional resource requirements for 2025, estimated in the amount of \$43,200 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs and Conference Management, would be included in a revised estimates report for consideration by the General Assembly through the Fifth Committee during the main part of its seventy-ninth session. The requirements for 2026 would be presented in the proposed programme budget for 2026 for the consideration of the General Assembly at its eightieth session.

I will now read out the oral statement of meeting scheduling implications of draft decision A/78/L.101, as orally revised. The following statement is made pursuant to paragraph 20 of resolution 77/335, of 1 September 2023, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretariat to draw the attention of the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs to overlapping high-level meetings of the Assembly prior to action on proposals that mandate the holding of meetings of the Assembly on specific dates.

Under the terms of sub-paragraph (c) of the draft decision before it, the Assembly would decide to convene a one-day high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly no later than the last day of the general debate of the Assembly at its eighty-first session to further consider sea level rise. That meeting would overlap with mandated meetings of the General Assembly if it were held in parallel with the general debate of the General Assembly at its eighty-first session.

The President: Delegations wishing to make a statement in explanation of position on the draft resolution and/or the draft decision are invited to do so now in one intervention.

That not being the case, the Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/78/L.100, entitled “Scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level plenary meeting on addressing the existential threats posed by sea level rise”.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/78/L.100?

Draft resolution A/78/L.100 was adopted (resolution 78/319).

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft decision A/78/L.101, entitled “Enhancing action on sea level rise”, as orally revised.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/78/L.101, as orally revised?

Draft decision A/78/L.101, as orally revised, was adopted (decision 78/558).

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

Mr. Lautasi (Samoa): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the 39 small island developing States (SIDS) that are specifically affected by the effects of sea level rise.

We begin by thanking the co-facilitators of this resolution (resolution 78/319), Ambassador Schwalger of New Zealand and Ambassador Chan of Costa Rica, for their extensive work to bring us through this process, ensuring that the voices of the most affected were given appropriate weight in these discussions. We would also like to thank you,

Mr. President, for your consistent advocacy on this critical issue. The upcoming meeting and the actions that we take from there are an excellent legacy for a General Assembly President from the small islands.

As we have said before, in this era of unprecedented and relentless sea level rise, we must make sure that all the bodies of our international institutions are directed to confronting the reality of the climate crisis and the disproportionate effect that it has on small island developing States. AOSIS has been deeply engaged in the discussions around sea level rise for years. It is an issue of critical importance for us and one that we must address with the utmost urgency. We came into the process determined that it should match the severity and urgency of the threats that we face. Although not perfect, resolution 78/319 and decision 78/558 provide a strong foundation for further enhancing the work of the United Nations system on sea level rise. That will create a stepwise process over the next few years for increasing action in the General Assembly and has the potential to provide political visibility for a critical issue and add momentum to all the processes that are already discussing it. But we should also make it clear that we cannot wait. Sea level rise is already causing serious and irreversible damage to our islands. SIDS have compromised significantly on this outcome. We hope and expect that the steps along our stepwise process are large and ambitious. This is no time for half-steps. To that end, we have three final comments.

First, the summary of the September high-level meeting should be concise and action-oriented if it is to be useful in driving action. A staid summary of proceedings is not the document that we need from the meeting.

Secondly, we would encourage you, Mr. President, to consult widely in developing the panels for the high-level event. There are numerous experts in small islands who can speak to the science, traditional knowledge and impacts of sea-level rise.

Finally, in September the Heads of State and Government of AOSIS will adopt a normative declaration on sea level rise and statehood and present it during the high-level meeting. We encourage other States to join us in making clear statements on the durability of statehood in the face of sea level rise induced by climate change. We look forward to the event in September and to enhancing action on sea level rise across the United Nations system.

Mr. Zahneisen (Germany): I have the honour to deliver this joint statement on behalf of the member countries of the Coalition for Addressing Sea-level Rise and its Existential Threats (C-SET), namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Denmark, Malta, Morocco, New Zealand, Palau, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Tuvalu and my own country, Germany.

At the outset, C-SET would like to express its sincere appreciation to the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of New Zealand and Costa Rica, for their tireless efforts and dedication throughout the past six months. Their guidance, flexibility and ingenuity have been invaluable in navigating the unexpected contradictions and challenges that transpired during the process. While we in C-SET acknowledge the progress made, we cannot ignore the gravity of the situation on the ground. Small island States and low-lying coastal States and communities cannot address the existential threats posed by sea level rise alone. While the outcome achieved falls short of the ambitious actions required and, frankly, expected by the populations and communities affected, we are nevertheless encouraged by the co-facilitators' successful efforts to achieve a consensus on decision 78/558, which will ultimately lead us towards a negotiated outcome in the near future.

We at C-SET welcome the important elements of the decision, which are recognizing the urgency of addressing sea level rise, acknowledging its multidimensional nature and welcoming regional efforts. However, we maintain that it would have been desirable to include a stronger emphasis on concrete action in the decision, as well as a regular review of the commitments made in addressing the threats posed by sea level rise. C-SET urges all parties to continue working diligently for a future where the adverse impacts of sea level rise are better anticipated, mitigated and prevented — and when that is not possible, to prevent loss and damage, plan solutions in advance to minimize adverse impacts and enable affected countries and populations to adapt and prosper. Last but not least, the rights, livelihoods and rich cultural heritage of vulnerable communities must be protected. C-SET remains committed to collaborating with all Member States and stakeholders to achieve those critical goals and leave no one behind.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you, Sir, personally for your commitment throughout the past year in putting this very important and vital question for humankind on the Assembly's agenda.

Mr. May (Fiji): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 member States of the Pacific Islands Forum with a presence in New York, namely, Australia, Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Fiji.

First and foremost, our group is indebted to the service of our co-facilitators, Ambassador Schwalger of New Zealand and Ambassador Chan Valverde of Costa Rica, and their teams for their able leadership and commitment, enabling us to reach this important milestone. Besides that, where we are today, Mr. President, would not have been possible without your consistent advocacy, ever since your first visit to the Pacific, on an issue that you are familiar with. We take pride in the fact that you have not only advocated but ensured that this urgent issue has found a home in the General Assembly on the eve of your departure. It will be your legacy.

Ever since the first informal consultation was convened, and up until the fourteenth session, which concluded in July, our group has been engaged constructively and consistently throughout. As we contemplate our progress, rhetorically speaking, we could have been the group whose sail was brought down by the turbulence created by varying degrees of winds and waves. However, one thing was clear. While we stuck to our guns, we nonetheless listened and were willing to show flexibility in our resolve. The fact is that strength lies in differences rather than similarities. We have been each other's harvest, we have been each other's business, and we have been each other's force and bond leading to this milestone today.

With that, our group would like to thank all delegations for their engagement, collaboration and support throughout the long and arduous course of the negotiations. As a group, we have taken progressive steps regionally, as witnessed in our modality resolution (resolution 78/319), because that has been a priority for the Pacific in the face of the devastating threat that sea level rise poses to our people and livelihoods. Sea level rise requires global collaboration and international cooperation. Our leaders will reconvene in Tonga this month for the 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting under the theme "Transformative resilient Pasifiki: build better now", and our action today will be an important contribution to our leaders' deliberation. Today we are delighted that the wishes of our people

and those at the front line of the threat posed by sea level rise, such as small island developing States, will find solace in the fact that the United Nations is listening and is here for them. While we support the two documents, resolution 78/319 and decision 78/558, as presented, we have three final comments:

First, we fully support ensuring that the summary outcome of September's high-level meeting is concise and action-oriented, capturing our leaders' call, which should be the basis for future actions on sea level rise.

Secondly, in relation to the four panels of the high-level event, we call for the voices of our experts, who are on the front line of sea level rise, to also be considered as panellists.

Thirdly and finally, we support every measure in future that ensures that sea level rise remains on the agenda of the General Assembly. With that, the group supports the resolution and decision before us and welcomes their respective adoption.

I would like to say a few words in my national capacity as the representative of Fiji.

Fiji is pleased with the adoption of the modality resolution and the decision today. And we align our statement with the statement as delivered by Samoa on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States and the statement just delivered on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Throughout this process, we note and applaud the sterling leadership of our two co-facilitators, the Permanent Representative of New Zealand and the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica, and their respective teams. We are indebted to their creativity and stewardship, and we thank them for a job well done.

The debate has been challenging on an issue that is critical to sustainability and the livelihoods of many States, in particular, small island developing States. It will be a great honour to one day leave the gates of the United Nations and realize that sea level rise has finally found a home in the General Assembly and that the voices of thousands of communities, in particular the vulnerable who are exposed to the urgent threat of sea level rise, are heard.

This is exactly the issue that the United Nations must and should stand for. The United Nations must take on board new and urgent issues and make a difference. Sea level rise is one such issue, ensuring that the United

Nations remains relevant and keeps up with new and emerging challenges. The impact of sea level rise is already creating new sources of instability and conflict, and the devastation has decimated many livelihoods across communities. In Fiji, for instance, about 42 Fijian villages are expected to relocate in the medium to long term, with substantial cost to the Government. With the Pacific being the region most affected, our Pacific Island Forum leaders, as I mentioned, have for centuries anticipated the impact various scenarios caused by sea level rise have on our statehood.

As reflected in the modality resolution, the Pacific region has already progressed out of necessity, and our leaders have already committed to securing the future of our people. Here at the United Nations, we have taken a cross-regional approach, including cosigning joint communication, circulated in May, to advance our common goal as led by Cabo Verde.

In view of that, we have the following two additional recommendations. First, we reiterate the need for a summary of this September high-level meeting that is concise and action-oriented, and secondly, we must ensure that sea level rise remains on the agenda of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, Fiji supported the adoption of the two documents and will continue to support the advancement of the topic of sea level rise now and in future to ensure that no one is left behind.

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

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

We would like to express our appreciation to the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica and the Permanent Representative New Zealand, for guiding us successfully through this complex exercise. We agree fully with their repeated statements in the course of the consultations that climate change, including sea level rise in particular, affect us all profoundly, requiring decisive and urgent action. Any such action requires political will and broad

international cooperation to be effective. Thanks to the leadership of the two co-facilitators, we now have a General Assembly process dedicated to addressing the multiple threats posed by sea level rise. We look forward to engaging in this process but also in other relevant forums tackling the sustainable development and climate angles of sea level rise, including but not limited to the United Nations Ocean Conferences.

I would like to make three observations with regard to resolution 78/319 and decision 78/558.

First, the EU and its member States fully support the open, inclusive and transparent nature of the modalities of the high-level plenary meeting. The meaningful participation of the political leadership and the scientific community, as well as civil society at large, is paramount in order to identify and address the multitude of threats posed by sea level rise.

Secondly, we are supportive of the very broad agreement reached in the consultations and reflected in the resolution that the high-level plenary meeting and the subsequent process are without prejudice to, and should not pre-empt, other ongoing processes, specifically the work of the open-ended Study Group of the International Law Commission on the topic of sea level rise in relation to international law and the work carried out under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Lastly, the EU and its member States will participate actively in the high-level plenary meeting, as well as the subsequent process that will culminate in another high-level plenary meeting at the eighty-first session with the aim of sustaining the urgency and scaling up actions to address the effects of sea level rise. Those actions should be aimed at ensuring the preservation of stability and security in international relations, including legal stability, certainty and predictability, and should safeguard sustainable development and respect human rights. Those actions need to be in line with and respect the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the ocean and seas must be carried out.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of New Zealand and my own country, Costa Rica, as the co-facilitators of resolution 78/319, entitled “Scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level plenary meeting on addressing the existential threats posed by sea level rise”.

At the outset, we would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Dennis Francis, for entrusting us with the responsibility of facilitating these negotiations.

As co-facilitators, we accepted the task, convinced that this high-level meeting is both paramount and urgent. This high-level meeting marks the vital start of a long-overdue dialogue on the significant threat that sea level rise poses to many Member States. Despite the urgency, the negotiation process has proven to be more complex than initially anticipated. It involved 14 rounds of informal consultations and numerous bilateral meetings over five months.

From the beginning of the consultation process, we were able to attest that there were varying levels of knowledge in the organization on the complex and multifaceted nature of the threats posed by sea level rise. In addition, the negotiation process faced the resistance that is naturally encountered when addressing a new topic in the United Nations, despite its seriousness.

Rising sea levels have so far been seen as only one of the many consequences of climate change. It is only after proper consideration that we see all of the pernicious effects, such as the salinization of fresh waters, the displacement of coastal communities and the impacts on ecosystems, livelihoods, culture and heritage, among many others.

The novelty of the topic as a stand-alone issue proved challenging owing to its multifaceted nature. Addressing it efficiently requires an interdisciplinary approach, compelling us to break down the silos we are accustomed to.

Our efforts were dedicated to ensuring an ambitious and impactful high-level meeting in September. We sought to achieve the most favourable outcomes for the most affected States.

This high-level meeting will mark a watershed moment in our collective response to the complex threat of sea level rise. It will offer an unparalleled platform for our leaders to discuss that critical issue and outline their concrete, urgent proposals for action.

The four multi-stakeholder panels will allow us to have four specific discussions on different aspects of sea level rise. Those discussions will be based on the best available science and knowledge for risk assessment and decision-making. Aspects of sea level rise such as adaptation, finance and resilience; the effects on

livelihood, culture and heritage; and socioeconomic challenges, as well as its legal dimensions, will be part of the deliberations of our world leaders.

As members are aware, the outcome of the high-level meeting was the main challenge in the context of the negotiations. During the process, we found ourselves balancing the aspirations of two significant groups of States: those most affected, who advocated for a very ambitious negotiated political declaration, and those who, while recognizing the issue's relevance, believed the membership was not ready for a negotiated outcome at this stage. To address those challenges and balance the legitimate concerns of the most affected States, we, as co-facilitators, proposed a draft decision (decision 78/558). The decision was aimed at providing the organization with an initial road map for States to begin addressing the issue comprehensively. The decision incorporates input from various groups of States, offering a path forward that respects all perspectives while promoting swift action.

The decision, which has been officially adopted, encompasses three main elements. First, it affirms Member States' commitment to strengthening international cooperation and partnerships. That commitment is aimed at enhancing comprehensive and effective responses to sea level rise. Secondly, it requests the Secretary-General for the first-ever report on the challenges related to sea level rise and on ways to address them. And thirdly, the decision mandates the organization of a subsequent high-level meeting during the eighty-first session, following the conclusion of an ongoing process. That meeting will further address sea level rise and culminate in a concise, action-oriented declaration, negotiated at the intergovernmental level.

As co-facilitators, we are satisfied with the result of the negotiation, and we would like to thank all delegations for their cooperation and flexibility. Throughout the process, we witnessed first-hand how consensus is forged. It requires flexibility, good faith, solidarity and dialogue. Consensus is never found; it is actively created.

The process was profoundly inspiring. It demanded not just leadership, but also the art of bridge-building, compromise and unwavering good faith. Each challenge was met with resilience and collaboration. Together we transformed obstacles into opportunities.

As of this moment, sea level rise is no longer a stepchild of the climate change regime. It now has a home, and that home is the General Assembly.

Ms. Sisior (Palau): I am delivering this statement on behalf of Palau. We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representative of Samoa on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States and the representative of Fiji on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

We join others before us in extending our deepest appreciation to the two co-facilitators of resolution 78/319, Ambassador Schwalger of New Zealand and Ambassador Chan Valverde of Costa Rica, for their hard work in bringing us to where we are today. We are also deeply grateful to you, Mr. President, for bringing much-needed attention to the impacts of sea level rise and enabling discussions at the highest level to address this critical issue.

The Pacific has long been a leading voice in advocating for action on sea level rise since the early efforts of the Pacific Island Forum in 1989. Today's resolution is a significant milestone in our collective response to this urgent crisis. This decisive step reflects our shared commitment to limit global warming to 1.5°C and in emphasizing the need for accelerated adaptation efforts for the most vulnerable nations and the threats they now face.

As we gather to adopt the resolution on sea level rise modalities, it is imperative to emphasize the gravity of this issue. Low-lying countries, including small island developing States (SIDS), are already experiencing profound impacts, with significant portions of their lands becoming uninhabitable and some facing the devastating threat of complete inundation. For us, the people of Palau and the Pacific SIDS, the crisis transcends land loss; it endangers our homes, our cultures and our traditions that have been cherished and preserved for generations.

It is therefore vitally important that we continue to ensure that the voices of those most affected are integral to our discussions and decisions. Incorporating indigenous, traditional and local perspectives is essential to crafting an inclusive and effective response to the challenges posed by sea level rise.

We extend our sincere gratitude for the commitment and hard work that has gone into this process. Palau fully supports the adoption of the resolution and looks forward to a concise and action-oriented summary as

result of this September's high-level meeting to serve as a basis for continuing our collaborative efforts and actions to address the impacts of sea level rise.

Mr. Pell (United States of America): The United States of America thanks the co-facilitators for their persistent leadership on resolution 78/319 over the past several months. We are pleased to join consensus on enhanced action to address the threats of sea level rise, including at the high-level plenary this September on this issue.

The United States works closely with vulnerable island nations and coastal communities to address the impacts of sea level rise. We are doing that first through our shared priority of limiting warming to 1.5°C. We need to raise global ambition, particularly of other major economies, whose nationally determined contributions are not yet 1.5°C aligned. Secondly, we are doing that through the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience, or PREPARE, put forward by President Biden. We intend to help more than half a billion people adapt to and manage the impacts of climate change, including sea level rise. As part of that Plan, we are helping vulnerable countries get and use the information they need to make adaptation choices, including high-resolution assessments of sea level rise projections and coastal impacts and strengthening early warning systems.

Finally, without prejudice to future discussions in the Fifth Committee and elsewhere, our delegation understands equitable geographic representation in the context of resolution 78/319 to mean the full, meaningful and global inclusion of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector. And the United States will not accept limitations of those entities' participation based on that language. Furthermore, as there is no agreement on the definition of equitable geographic representation, no principle of equitable geographic representation has yet been established.

Ms. Kardash (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): With regard to the resolution 78/319 and decision 78/558, we would like to underscore the following.

The resolution and decision set a dangerous precedent for the future, whereby any process can be forcibly imposed on Member States by force, without a corresponding General Assembly decision. That has been our understanding throughout the negotiation process.

However, given the position of the Alliance of Small Island States, the Russian Federation finally agreed to hold the second high-level thematic meeting during the eighty-first session of the General Assembly. At the same time, we do not see any added value in the convening of such an event, as this topic is already being discussed in a number of processes, for instance, at various international conferences on small island developing States, United Nations Conferences to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, and as part of the preparation of an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the obligations of States in relation to climate change, as well as in political forums on sustainable development.

Mr. Navoti (Tuvalu): Tuvalu aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Samoa, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States; Fiji, on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum; and Germany, on behalf of the Coalition for Addressing Sea-level Rise and its Existential Threat.

We express our sincere appreciation to the co-facilitator — the Permanent Representatives of New Zealand and Costa Rica — for their tireless efforts and dedication. Their guidance has been invaluable in navigating the complexities of this process. For Tuvalu, sea level rise is the single greatest threat to our future survivability as a nation and as a people. We continue to experience intense land erosion, wave surges and coastal inundation, with the worst flooding during the high-tide season in February and March. This reality underscores the urgent need for comprehensive international action. While we recognize the progress made, we cannot ignore the gravity of the situation on the ground. Small island States and low-lying coastal communities cannot address the existential threats posed by sea level rise alone. Resolution 78/319 and decision 78/558 provide a necessary framework, but more explicit commitments and actions are needed. However, we must emphasize that time is of the essence. We cannot afford to wait; our responses must be ambitious and immediate.

In conclusion, it is neither just nor equitable for countries like Tuvalu, which contribute the least to climate change, to bear the highest burdens of living with a deteriorating climate system. We look forward to the high-level meeting on sea level rise and to enhancing action across the United Nations system. It is imperative that we collectively prioritize and act on this issue in order to secure a sustainable and resilient future for all.

Let us not be remembered as the generation that stood idly by while entire nations vanished beneath the waves. Instead, let us rise to the challenge, united and resolute, to safeguard our shared home and ensure that Tuvalu and other vulnerable nations not only survive, but thrive. The time for action is now. Let us make history together.

Mr. Çetin (Türkiye): I take the floor to provide an explanation of position regarding resolution 78/319, on the scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level plenary meeting on addressing the existential threats posed by sea level rise, as well as decision 78/558, on enhancing action on sea level rise.

We are very much aware of your determination and commitment, Mr. President, to ensure that the issue of sea level rise receives the attention it deserves and that small island developing States (SIDS) receive the full support of the international community to protect their homes, homelands and heritage. In fact, by recently endorsing the Antigua and Barbuda agenda for SIDS, we recognized that SIDS are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which represents the greatest of threats to the survival and viability of the people, natural ecosystems and sustainable development of SIDS.

Türkiye strongly supports the well-being, prosperity and sustainable development of SIDS. Going forward, our focus will be the effective implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda agenda in order to address the current challenges SIDS face and build resilient economies against future shocks, as well as to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With that understanding, Türkiye joined the consensus today on the relevant resolution and decision on sea level rise. We have actively and constructively contributed to the consultations from the very beginning, yet we would like to highlight a few points on which we do not fully agree but chose to go along with in order to reach a consensual text.

The articles of this resolution and decision regarding the modalities of the high-level meeting and future meetings on this topic should not constitute a precedent for future United Nations conferences and meetings to be organized on different topics. These should not automatically become so-called agreed language for future reference, including operative paragraph 9 of the resolution, as well as operative paragraph 3 of the decision. Each modalities resolution should be based

on its own merits. Accordingly, new and upcoming modalities resolutions should be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Türkiye strongly supports the participation of civil society organizations in the work of the United Nations as long as their objectives and activities are in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We therefore support civil society organizations whose activities will contribute to the aims and objectives of the high-level meeting on addressing the existential threats posed by sea level rise. Türkiye is against any attempt to circumvent established United Nations procedures to create alternative tracks for the participation of non-State actors in United Nations summits and conferences. To that end, we encourage all Member States to refrain from abusing the modalities resolutions of United Nations meetings, and we further underline the importance of respecting the intergovernmental nature of this Organization to reach our shared vision

On a separate note, as is well known, Türkiye is not a party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and has consistently expressed that it does not agree with the view that the Convention has a universal and unified character. The approval of this resolution and decision, as well as participation of Türkiye in the meetings to be organized in this framework cannot be construed as a change in Türkiye's legal position with regard to UNCLOS. Accordingly, Türkiye expects that the outcome documents of the high-level plenary meeting during the general debate of the General Assembly at its eighty-first session will be agreed by consensus, as underlined in the decision.

As Türkiye set out at the fourth International Conference on SIDS in Antigua and Barbuda, we are committed to supporting SIDS in their efforts towards sustainable development, resilience-building and climate action and are ready and willing to continue working with SIDS in order to achieve the Antigua and Barbuda agenda.

Mr. Fidoe (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 78/319 and thanks the co-facilitators for their efforts to reach agreement. We look forward to the high-level meetings. Ahead of the meetings, it is important to affirm the universal and unified character of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We reaffirm that UNCLOS sets out the legal framework within which

all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out and is of strategic importance as the basis for national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector. The integrity of UNCLOS needs to be maintained.

Secondly, civil society is essential to our work at the United Nations and helps to ensure that what we do here has an impact on the ground. We benefit from civil society's experience and unique insights, which in turn allow us to develop more comprehensive and inclusive solutions to global challenges.

We are glad to see that language was included in this resolution that allows for more meaningful civil society participation in this important high-level meeting. We believe that it is crucial that civil society organizations are granted wide participation to this summit.

Mr. Ghafouri (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, my delegation would like to extend its sincere appreciation to the co-facilitator for facilitating the negotiation process.

My delegation would also like to reaffirm that the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to addressing climate change at the national, regional and international levels, based on the principles of fairness, partnership, collaboration, national ownership, common but differentiated responsibility and the historical and legal responsibility of developed countries in that regard. We are of the view that the final text does not properly reflect the concerns and priorities of developing countries in that connection and particularly lags behind with regard to its means of implementation, including the financial assistance, technology transfer and capacity-building required for sustainable development and addressing the challenges of climate change.

Mr. Babo Soares (Timor-Leste): This statement is aligned with that delivered earlier by the representative of Samoa on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

Timor-Leste, as a small island developing State (SIDS), is highly vulnerable to the effects of sea level rise. With a coastline more than 700 kilometres long, our country is exposed to the risks of coastal erosion, flooding and salt-water intrusion into freshwater sources. As a result, we are deeply concerned about the consequences of sea level rise and are actively seeking the support of the international community, particularly the United Nations, in addressing the pressing issue. Our view of sea level rise is one of urgency and concern.

Timor-Leste, like other small island developing States, is already experiencing the effects of climate change, with rising sea levels, increasingly frequent and severe storms and changes in rainfall patterns. Our Government recognizes that sea level rise poses a significant threat to the country's future development, including with regard to food security and its people's livelihoods. As a SIDS, Timor-Leste is asking the United Nations to take immediate and collective action to address the root causes of rising sea levels. We urge the international community to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, transition to renewable energy sources and support climate change adaptation and resilience efforts in vulnerable countries. While such calls are not new to anyone, we have to make them repeatedly in order to constantly remind the international community to keep in mind the severe consequences of ignoring these issues.

Specifically, and echoing statements by other speakers, Timor-Leste calls on the United Nations to continue to increase support for climate-change adaptation and resilience efforts, including funding, technology transfer and capacity-building, to strengthen international cooperation in addressing the global causes of sea level rise, including reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and transitioning to renewable energy sources, and to provide technical assistance and support for the development of early-warning systems, climate-resilient infrastructure and climate-smart agriculture practices. Where addressing the impact of sea level rise is concerned, we also call for increasing funding and support for climate-change adaptation and resilience in heavily affected countries such as Timor-Leste; promoting sustainable land-use practices, including the reforestation and conservation of natural habitats, in order to reduce the risk of coastal erosion and flooding; supporting the development of climate-resilient infrastructure, including sea walls, jetties and climate-resilient buildings; enhancing climate-change education, awareness and community engagement in order to build resilience and promote climate-smart practices; and encouraging international cooperation and knowledge-sharing to address the global causes of sea level rise and support climate-change adaptation efforts in vulnerable countries.

Timor-Leste supports resolution 78/319, which we have adopted here today. It is in line with previous calls on the topic, and with the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (resolution 78/317), aimed at addressing the

impacts of sea level rise. We urge the United Nations to take immediate action to address this pressing issue. It is also important to assist small island developing States with their ongoing development if they are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The countries that are most affected need support to adapt to a changing climate, reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions and build resilience in the face of the impact of sea level rise. Collective action is essential to addressing the global causes of sea level rise and supporting climate-change adaptation efforts for our good and the good of all humankind.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position after adoption.

At this point, I would like to add my own words of thanks and appreciation to our brilliant co-facilitators, Ambassadors Maritza Chan Valverde and Carolyn Schwalger, the Permanent Representatives of Costa Rica and New Zealand to the United Nations, respectively, for their sincere and tireless efforts in bringing this process to a positive conclusion. I am sure that I speak on behalf of all delegations and Members of the Assembly in expressing our grateful thanks for their dedication and persistence. My sincere appreciation also goes to the delegations for their constructive engagement and flexibility throughout the process.

I am confident that the high-level meeting will be a crescendo of our efforts to deliver on promises and ease anxieties for the millions of people living in small island developing States and low-lying coastal areas around the world for whom sea level rise is an immediate threat. With the support and high-level participation of Member States and other stakeholders, the meeting will be an opportunity to deliver action-oriented solutions for the States and front-line communities affected. Taking place on the heels of the Summit of the Future, it will be a critical moment to send a strong, united message on the urgent need to address sea level rise. Decision 78/559, adopted by the General Assembly today, charts a way forward for enhancing action on sea level rise and elevating a crucial issue on the United Nations agenda. I look forward to the continued collaboration of the international community in working with Member States and the communities affected to alleviate their concerns and address the impact of sea level rise globally.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 13 and 117.

Agenda item 125 (continued)**Global health and foreign policy****Draft decision (A/78/L.97)****Draft amendment (A/78/L.103)**

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States to introduce draft amendment A/78/L.103.

Mr. Shrier (United States of America): We are pleased to propose draft amendment A/78/L.103 to draft decision A/78/L.97, on the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector in the high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance.

The draft amendment seeks to restore the full, original list of civil society organizations originally presented. NGOs have a vital role to play in addressing antimicrobial resistance, including outreach on the use of medicines, healthcare delivery and monitoring to ensure that we are making progress towards better antimicrobial resistance policies. Resolution 78/269, the modalities resolution governing today's meeting, does not state that NGOs wishing to participate must have exclusive competence in health issues. We regret that some Member States continue to use the no-objection procedure to block NGOs based on political considerations unrelated to the purpose of the high-level meeting. There has never been a discussion of why those NGOs were blocked, and it was done in a non-transparent manner. Those seven NGOs are well known and well established, and they certainly can contribute to meeting our antimicrobial resistance objectives, through both outreach and monitoring. Our amendment simply supports restoring the seven NGOs that were removed. We are not adding any new NGOs. We support the original recommendation by the United Nations, and we urge all Member States to vote in favour of this amendment and to avoid politicizing the process of including civil society in our United Nations processes.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/78/L.97 and draft amendment A/78/L.103. The draft amendment has now closed for e-sponsorship.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. De Miranda (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft

amendment, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become co-sponsors of draft amendment A/78/L.103: Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste and Ukraine.

The President: Delegations wishing to make a statement in explanation of vote before the voting on any proposal under this item are invited to do so now in one intervention.

After action on all of them, there will be an opportunity for explanations of vote after the voting on any or all of them. Before giving the floor for explanations of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gaal (Hungary): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

We support this draft amendment (A/78/L.103) and align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of the United States of America. We regret that some delegations continue to use the no-objection procedure to try to block non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the basis of political considerations unrelated to the purpose of the high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance. We are disappointed that the objections to those NGOs have not been formally justified.

We recall the joint priority of ensuring an open, inclusive and transparent process that is open to stakeholders, including from civil society, academia and the private sector. The active participation of all stakeholders will be in the interest of the legitimacy of the process but will also contribute to reaching an ambitious outcome. In that vein, the European Union and its member States call for supporting and facilitating the participation of all stakeholders, in line with the letter and spirit of the modalities as adopted by the General Assembly.

Ms. Kardash (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation is once again compelled to take steps to prevent certain non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from participating in the work of the General Assembly. That should not be construed as blocking the very useful contribution of such organizations to the work of the United Nations. Moreover, the Russian Federation itself has nominated NGO representatives, such as representatives of academic institutions, civil society organizations and the business community and includes them in its delegation. For example, we have nominated Mr. Roman Kozlov, Rector of the Smolensk State Medical University, to participate in the upcoming high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance as a panellist.

Nonetheless, the draft amendment (A/78/L.103) under consideration today lists non-governmental organizations whose activities are focused on political subjects, rather than on the topic at hand. The participation of such NGOs in the upcoming high-level meeting poses potential risks to a constructive, professional and depoliticized discussion. We are also not convinced that the NGOs concerned will be able to add value to the specialized discussions to be held at the high-level meeting. Furthermore, we are particularly disquieted by the continued flouting of the principles of consensus and non-objection to the involvement of NGOs in the work of the United Nations. We have been witnessing this trend for a long time and regard it to be at odds with the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations and the Charter of the United Nations. It also seems to undermine the foundations of the work of specialized United Nations bodies focused on relations with NGOs, including the relevant Committee on NGOs. Russia will vote against the proposed amendment and calls on Member States to support us as we endeavour to revert to the principle of consensus.

Ms. Reyes (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom supports the draft amendment (A/78/L.103) and aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the United States.

We were glad to see that language was included in the modalities resolution 78/269, which allows for meaningful and inclusive civil society participation at this important meeting. Those modalities allow us to see the rationale for objections to the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and we are grateful that the language has given the decision-making power back to the Assembly, rather than any single

Member State. However, we regret that some Member States continue to use the non-objection basis to attempt to block NGOs for political reasons unrelated to the purpose of the high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance. That practice undermines our collective efforts and the spirit of collaboration that is needed to address global health challenges. Civil society has a long and proven history of contributing to global health initiatives, including tackling antimicrobial resistance. We believe it is essential that civil society organizations be granted wide participation in the high-level meeting. Failing to leverage the expertise of civil society would be a disservice to our collective efforts. Therefore, we advocate for their full inclusion in this process.

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

In accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, before we proceed to take a decision on draft decision A/78/L.97, the Assembly shall first take a decision on draft amendment A/78/L.103.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Against:

Belarus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic

Abstaining:

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahrain, Belize, Brunei Darussalam, China, Cuba, Egypt, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen

Draft amendment A/78/L.103 was adopted by 70 votes to 6, with 45 abstentions.

The President: Since draft amendment A/78/L.103 has been adopted, we shall proceed to take action on draft decision A/78/L.97, as amended.

The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/78/L.97, entitled "Participation of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector in the high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance", as amended.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision A/78/L.97, as amended?

Draft decision A/78/L.97, as amended, was adopted (decision 78/559).

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

Mr. Quinto Gonzalez (Mexico) (spoke in Spanish): Antimicrobial resistance is a threat to global public health that can have devastating effects on humans, which is why it is urgent that joint action should be focused on preventing a health crisis.

Mexico's vote in favour of amendment A/78/L.103, which was just adopted, rests fundamentally on two ideas. The first is about the potential benefits that the participation of non-governmental organizations represents for the United Nations system, and the second is the imperative to observe and apply the principle of transparency in the Organization's decision-making processes. The current Government of Mexico, led by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, has emphasized the maxim that whatever is public must be ever more public. The Mexican delegation therefore welcomes the participation of various organizations

in the high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance. My country believes that the intergovernmental process under way could be enriched by the diverse experiences, perspectives and information provided by non-governmental organizations. Even where there is disagreement, points of agreement can be found.

In that regard, resolution 78/269 states that the list of participants in the high-level meeting in question must be governed by the principles of transparency and fairness. It is interesting that the list of the non-governmental organizations in question was not shared with the membership in a timely manner. In addition, the reasons for the objection to them were not provided. That all undermines the spirit of inclusion that should be a *sine qua non* in our discussions and decisions. As we have done in various forums, Mexico will continue to advocate for the inclusion of actors who, in accordance with the principles of the resolution on modalities that I just cited, express the desire to participate. We also urge the rest of the membership to support those efforts in order to establish and strengthen discussions, create synergies and ensure that the outcomes of the high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance benefit all countries.

Mr. Imanuel (Indonesia): Indonesia would like to explain its vote on draft amendment A/78/L.103 to decision 78/559, on the participation of stakeholders in the 2024 high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance.

We recognize the important role of non-governmental organizations and civil society in tackling antimicrobial resistance. We also underscore that the success of the high-level meeting depends on ensuring that all countries uphold the greatest possible respect for a spirit of consensus, dialogue and good-faith negotiations. That includes the need to respect the consensus achieved in the deliberations on resolution 78/269, on the modalities of the meeting, laying out the vision, commitment and procedures with which the meeting will be conducted. The countries that produced the resolution have made tireless efforts to ensure that the collective work of tackling antimicrobial resistance for sustainable development really benefits everyone.

In that regard, the General Assembly and all Member States have agreed to expand the participation of non-governmental civil society organizations based on the non-objection principle. However, today we are once again seeing countries taking action that not only

undermines the agreed consensus of the modalities resolution but also symbolizes the belief of the mighty that they can just take everything and are above the law. It ignores the concerns that some countries may have, which could be based on valid reasons, and it also ignores the text of the modalities resolution, which we agreed on by consensus. Furthermore, it is disrespectful to the agreements reached in international forums such as the General Assembly, with such countries' actions prioritizing their own individual interests at the expense of trust and unity, leaving us to question the worth of the words in consensus Assembly resolutions and our fundamental purpose in the Assembly altogether. Such actions fuel the growing deficit of trust among States and erode faith in the multilateral system, setting a dangerous precedent. We want to underscore that respect for established mechanisms that we have already agreed on is a prerequisite for our endeavour to promote inclusivity and safeguard multilateralism. It ensures the credibility and effective functioning of the relevant mechanisms and the overall multilateral system. We therefore abstained in the voting on the amendment.

Mr. Valido Martínez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Amendment A/78/L.103 is aimed at perpetuating a formula that undermines and ignores the principle of non-objection that for decades has characterized the participation of civil society organizations without Economic and Social Council consultative status in the work of the United Nations. My delegation does not support attempts to erode the principle of non-objection, which should be rescued and preserved in its original sense. The amendment presented today helps only to politicize and cause division within the work of the United Nations.

Cuba is convinced that civil society participation has for decades been useful and beneficial to the work of the United Nations. We have witnessed how thousands of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including many from the South and from Cuba, have made a significant contribution to the work of the United Nations, in line with established procedures and practices, including the consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and the principle of non-objection. Therefore, Cuba's abstention does not represent a value judgment on the NGOs contained in amendment A/78/L.103.

Ms. Pereira Gomes (Brazil): Brazil welcomes civil society participation in the United Nations. That is why we voted in favour of amendment A/78/L.103.

However, we cannot help but notice that it is adding a list composed of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from exclusively developed countries. As we know, antimicrobial resistance disproportionately affects developing countries. We believe that the participation of NGOs from the States that often lack the funding to come to New York should be further encouraged.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 125.

Agenda item 130

Report of the United Nations Youth Office

Report of the Secretary-General (A/78/949)

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

Mrs. Samson (European Union): I am delivering this statement on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 member States. The candidate countries Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, as well as Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

We would first like to extend our gratitude to the Office of the Secretary-General for the report on the United Nations Youth Office (A/78/949) and for the opportunity to contribute a statement on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

The EU continues to support the essential mission of United Nations engagement with and for young persons, recognizing that full and meaningful youth engagement in policy and decision-making processes is key to identifying the solutions that our world urgently needs. We remain steadfast in our commitment to support young people as equal partners in our efforts towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, the preservation and the promotion of peace and security, the fulfilment of human rights and the principle of leaving no one behind. We appreciate the progress and achievements that have been made to enhance youth engagement since the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office, and that is why the EU has announced a contribution of €1 million to the United Nations Youth Office.

The European Union encourages the Youth Office to be ambitious in the implementation of its mandate. The Youth Office should work across the system in a cross-cutting way to ensure that young persons are meaningfully engaged in all United Nations processes, going beyond the fulfilment of the objectives of the United Nations Youth Strategy and rejuvenating the United Nations workforce. The EU will also continue to support the Office's key role in advancing the youth, peace and security agenda.

We welcome the transition of the Office to funding from the regular budget, which provides it with a new degree of financial stability, autonomy and independence. Notwithstanding the ongoing cost-containment measures resulting from the United Nations liquidity crisis, we strongly encourage the Youth Office to accelerate as soon as possible its staff hiring process in order to be able to use all funds allocated to the Office, in order to accelerate the progress of its mandate. We would like to see the Youth Office attract the best experts on youth issues with ample expertise on youth engagement at the United Nations so that its mandate can be fulfilled in the best way possible.

We will continue our strong collaboration with the United Nations Youth Office. And we remain steadfast in our belief that its work and mandate are fundamental to ensure that young persons participate meaningfully in the construction of their present and future.

Mr. Ferreira Silva Aranda (Portugal): Aligning myself with the statement just delivered on behalf of the European Union, I have the honour to take the floor today on behalf of my country, Portugal, whose commitment to the youth agenda, we believe, needs no introduction.

We would like, first of all, to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs for the presentation of the second report of the United Nations Youth Office (A/78/949). As we can see, the United Nations has been advancing its work on youth for several decades, marked by the adoption of numerous resolutions and by a range of activities and achievements by the United Nations Secretariat and the broader United Nations system.

There has also been growing recognition of young persons' role as positive agents of change and key contributors to the advancement of agreed global frameworks. In particular, we are pleased to see improvements in the engagement with youth, youth-led civil society organizations and networks.

The establishment of the Youth Office through resolution 76/306 was the first concrete deliverable of our common agenda following the intergovernmental process co-led by the Permanent Representatives of Egypt and Guyana.

Portugal paid great importance to the establishment of the Office. And we reiterate our full commitment to reinvigorate our common efforts in favour of youth.

In conclusion, while hoping for a timelier release of the report in future before the discussions are held in the General Assembly, we call on the United Nations Youth Office to accelerate the hiring process in order to complete its staff necessities, which we expect to include an agile team leveraging the rich capacity and technical expertise of the United Nations system as a whole.

In the Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1), Member States made a commitment to listen to and work with youth. We are confident that the Youth Office will help implement that commitment.

Mr. Grünwald (Slovakia): Slovakia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union and wishes to make some additional comments in its national capacity.

We highly appreciate this opportunity to hold a discussion on the second report of the United Nations Youth Office (A/78/949) since its formal establishment, which Slovakia had been staunchly supporting. The United Nations Youth Office represents a vital pillar for engagement with and for young people in our collective effort to empower youth worldwide.

We commend the managed process of transition from the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth to the United Nations Youth Office, and we would like to seize this opportunity to thank Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake once again for all work that has been undertaken. We support the Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, Mr. Felipe Paullier Olivera, in his current and future endeavours to fulfil the mandate of the Office, and in that regard, we share the concerns that the recruitment process has not been finalized yet. We are supportive of all measures necessary to remedy the situation without further delay.

Recognizing the critical role that youth play in shaping our future, we welcome the outlined initiatives of the Office to strengthen the voice of youth and enable

their meaningful participation in discussions within the United Nations framework. The vision of the future we want cannot be fully achieved without young people and their active contribution to the work of the United Nations. We particularly welcome that young people are involved in the preparatory process for the Summit of the Future and the drafting of the Declaration on Future Generations. Young people are closer in time to future generations. Their voices must therefore be heard.

In the rapidly changing world, youth have an irreplaceable role within communities and societies — fostering social cohesion, advocating peace and equality, as well as advancing development gains. By providing young people with platforms for meaningful participation and opportunities for leadership, we are investing in the leaders of tomorrow.

Slovakia has a long-standing commitment to provide youth with adequate space to actively contribute to the efforts of the United Nations. Our position has been clearly reflected in the basic spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals to leave no one behind. It is imperative that we continue to strengthen youth engagement, ensuring that their voices are integral to the decision-making processes defining our global trajectory.

The establishment of the United Nations Youth Office was undoubtedly a crucial step in fostering the position of youth and amplifying their voice, and we fully support its activities to reach our goal to live in a world where every young person has the chance to thrive.

Ms. Parmanand (Guyana): Guyana is pleased to participate in this meeting to consider the second report (A/78/949) of the United Nations Youth Office. We acknowledge the substantial progress made by the Youth Office in strengthening youth engagement and advancing youth issues across the United Nations system, as outlined in the report. We also welcome the appointment of the first Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, Mr. Felipe Paullier, on 1 December 2023 and wish him success in moving forward the work of the Office.

We are mere weeks away from the Summit of the Future. One cannot speak about the future without speaking of youth — they are the future. However, it is the investment in our youth today, now, that will determine the kind of future we bequeath to the generations to come.

It is in that light that Guyana believes that youth engagement is ever more important today as the world witnesses a rise in conflicts, many with youths at the centre. There are 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years, accounting for 16 per cent of the global population, many of whom live in conflict-affected areas. In areas with protracted conflicts, we have seen children transition to adolescence and even adulthood without peace. The role of youth in peacebuilding, including in mediation efforts and peace processes, is therefore critical.

We have also seen young people raising their voices and taking action in the fight against climate change. They have a direct stake and must be engaged to lead climate action efforts. To that end, Guyana applauds the efforts of the Youth Office in implementing the youth and peace and security agenda and in amplifying the voices of youth at the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

If we are to reap the dividends from the enthusiasm, energy and creativity of our young people, including through their full and effective engagement, we must invest in their education, in building their capacities, ensuring their health and well-being and in creating job opportunities for them. In short, we must not treat the issues affecting our youth in a pedestrian manner. They must be at the centre of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Guyana believes that young people can be agents for positive change, but we must create opportunities for them to do so and remove any existing obstacles. Their meaningful engagement in decision-making and policymaking processes at the local, regional and global levels remain critical for shaping a better future for all humankind. In that regard, we underscore the contributions that young people, including through the Youth Office, can make in the upcoming Summit of the Future and in the Declaration on Future Generations.

At the national level, Guyana has prioritized youth development initiatives, including through significant budgetary increases for programmes that directly benefit young people. These initiatives focus on education, skills training and vocational programmes, youth employment, entrepreneurial support, housing and sports.

In conclusion, Guyana extends its unwavering support for the work of the Youth Office, including

in exploring opportunities to foster greater youth engagement. We also remain committed to advancing the cause of youth — including the youth, peace and security agenda — during our tenure on the Security Council. We do not see this as an option, but as a responsibility.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/78/949).

Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Malta is a steadfast supporter of the human rights of young persons and their meaningful participation in decision-making processes. Such participation is vital for promoting and protecting human rights, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and maintaining international peace and security. That is why we fully supported the creation of the United Nations Youth Office — to ensure that the United Nations can effectively engage and support young persons as full partners in decision-making processes at all levels.

We are pleased to note the progress and achievements thus far, including the appointment of the first-ever Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, Mr. Felipe Paullier. We look forward to the Assistant Secretary-General's role in strengthening youth-related policies and coordinating processes and platforms across the United Nations system.

To effectively serve its purpose, the United Nations Youth Office must represent and engage with the diverse youth it aims to support, including young women and girls, LGBTQI+ individuals, people with disabilities and those experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Incorporating a gender perspective into the Office's work is crucial for achieving gender equality and addressing the persistent inequalities, gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms that often exclude young women and girls from decision-making processes.

While progress has been made in institutionalizing young persons' meaningful participation at the United Nations, more action is needed, particularly within the peace and security pillar. It is concerning to observe a decrease in the number of young persons briefing the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission in recent years. Greater resources and political will are essential to fully implement the youth, peace and security agenda. We advocate for increased engagement from the United Nations Youth Office in that regard

and note the recommendations presented by Assistant Secretary-General Paullier during the youth, peace and security debate in May (see S/PV.9637).

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

This year marks a turning point for young persons at the United Nations and beyond. The Pact for the Future, currently under negotiation, provides a unique opportunity to move towards a reinvigorated multilateral system that positively impacts young persons' lives and builds their trust in the United Nations and the multilateral system. We commend the Youth Office's efforts in supporting meaningful youth participation in the intergovernmental process leading up to the Summit of the Future. We must also ensure that young persons in all their diversity will be included in the follow-up process of the different outcomes.

As we continue to work towards fully operationalizing the United Nations Youth Office and ensuring meaningful youth participation across the United Nations system, we must ensure that the voices of young persons are not only heard but acted upon.

Mrs. Mazaeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The General Assembly's consideration of the United Nations Youth Office report (A/78/949) is an excellent opportunity — not just to learn about the activities of this new entity, but also to exchange views about the further development of the youth agenda, in the spirit of intergovernmental cooperation. Resolution 76/306, which established the Youth Office two years ago, entrusted it with the important and challenging task of leading engagement and advocacy on youth issues across the United Nations. It is no secret that young people are the most progressive and mobile part of society. They are ready to implement the most progressive reforms. But what will those reforms look like? How will the youth agenda develop and in which direction will it go?

Despite the unreasonably short time frame given to States to consider the report, we read it very carefully. We noted that, during the reporting period, the Office did a great deal of work in the following areas: the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda; promoting the participation of youth in humanitarian activities; promoting human rights education for and by youth; youth participation in activities related to climate change; ending inequalities between young men and young women; and combating

discrimination and violence against young women. Those are all important topics. Nevertheless, it is fair to note that this set of topics is being prioritized across a wide variety of United Nations platforms. At the same time, a whole host of issues, many of which are important to many States, including the Russian Federation, for some reason remain on the periphery of the United Nations and sometimes are completely ignored.

According to the report, a key component of the work of the Youth Office is strengthening meaningful youth engagement, yet that refers almost exclusively to youth participation in decision-making processes and Government policy design. We must not forget that young people can become the object of political manipulation by destructive forces. Young people might be influenced by extremist ideas. We must combat such trends. Moreover, the political sphere is not the only sphere of life that requires a different youth perspective. There are also the social, economic, spiritual and sporting spheres. Is the equal participation of young athletes in international competitions without discrimination on the basis of nationality and political preferences not a form of meaningful engagement in society?

Young people can make meaningful contributions to the implementation of social programmes. The same can be said of volunteering. Those skewed priorities are seen in the work on the draft chapter 4 of the Pact for the Future, on youth and future generations. We recall that innovative approaches in the promotion of multilateral youth engagement and empowerment initiatives should be submitted for consideration by Member States and not imposed on them as the only right approach.

We recognize that the Youth Office is currently in its inception and is probably not yet fully operational and not yet achieving its full potential. We trust that, in its future activities, the Office will pay greater attention to the implementation of operative paragraph 3 (g) of resolution 76/306, which stipulates that part of the mandate of the Youth Office is to promote and facilitate dialogue, cooperation and solidarity. With regard to the first component, the synergy generated by the enthusiasm of young generations and the experience of older generations is something that can be harnessed and promoted for the benefit of society. However, the basis for such a dialogue naturally begins in the family. That is why we reiterate that the family, as a social institution, is one of the main factors fostering sustainable development. In that regard, United Nations organizations, including the Youth Office, should

contribute to the strengthening of family policymaking, including as part of our common efforts to achieve the internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals.

We are convinced that many States Members of the United Nations, irrespective of their development trajectories or political preferences, will agree with the assertion that the strategic priority of State youth policy should be to create the conditions for the ongoing betterment of young people, strengthening their competitiveness, developing their erudition, improving their ability to adapt to changing conditions and making them more receptive to creative ideas. Lastly, we should nurture their formation as harmonious individuals with a strong moral and ethical foundation. To that end, States and the entire multilateral system must make efforts to provide young people with access to a range of basic services to enable them to choose a path to take for their life, education, employment and family formation.

With regard to intercultural dialogue, we believe that the idea of unity, with due respect for cultural and civilizational diversity, can be achieved at the global level and should be promoted in every possible way. In order to do so, stereotypes about the exceptionalism of some States and their superiority over others must be rejected. When developing youth policies and programmes, we must take into account the cultural and religious backgrounds of States and treat them with due respect.

For the Russian Federation, young people play a particular role in fostering tolerance and solidarity. At the beginning of March, in the city of Sochi in the Russian Federation, the World Youth Festival was held. It was attended by more than 20,000 representatives from more than 180 countries. We invited guests of the Festival to visit different regions of the Russian Federation. It was important for us to introduce our guests to the cultural and national diversity of our country. In response to many requests that we received, the Russian leadership decided to make the World Youth Festival a regular event. That initiative will undoubtedly contribute to the development of international solidarity and interpersonal contacts, strengthening friendship, fraternity, trust and mutual understanding among representatives of different cultures, religions and civilizations.

With regard to exchanging experiences on youth issues, we are working with many developing countries and focusing on creating educational opportunities.

Russian educational institutions host approximately 1 million students from different countries. Expanding opportunities for young people is one of the Russian Federation's top priorities. Russia sees young people as an equal partner in shaping and implementing policy in that area.

We are making significant efforts in designing and implementing youth policies at the levels of legislation and law enforcement and have accumulated a great deal of experience in developing youth entrepreneurship, supporting socially important projects, establishing intergenerational dialogue, running volunteer programmes, providing assistance to young people who have fallen on hard times, supporting youth tourism and many other areas. We are ready to share our experience with and adopt the best practices of other States. The youth agenda is multifaceted and diverse. Exploring its various aspects is key to building a better world for future generations.

We express our sincere hope that, in its future activities, the United Nations Youth Office will be as receptive to new ideas and proposals and as flexible in its approaches and views as are young people themselves, whose empowerment the Office is called on to champion.

Ms. Makgati (South Africa): South Africa would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his second report on the United Nations Youth Office (A/78/949). This is a significant milestone achievement, as we congratulate Dr. Felipe Paullier Olivera, the Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, as the youngest-ever senior official in the history of the United Nations. We further welcome, under his capable leadership, the clear three major areas of action of the Youth Office, namely, first, accelerating the implementation of the United Nations Youth Strategy to drive progress across the three pillars of the Organization; secondly, rejuvenating the United Nations workforce; and thirdly, engaging young people meaningfully to realize both objectives.

The work of the United Nations Youth Office is already evident throughout the United Nations system as they seek to implement their actions by advancing meaningful youth engagement at all levels. That is further anchored upon the United Nations Youth Strategy, which is implemented by 132 United Nations country teams in different countries, one of which South Africa is proud to be. In the fourth *Youth2030*

Progress Report, launched only a month ago, the challenges faced and progress achieved across global, regional and national levels are clearly captured.

We further take note that the Youth Office has reviewed the strengths and gaps in the internship policies and programmes of the United Nations, through its report entitled "Internships in the United Nations: an exploratory review". It is hoped that their recommendations do, in fact, transform internships and make them coherent, fair and especially accessible to young people from across the world — from regions such as ours, where youth unemployment is a great challenge.

The Economic and Social Council Youth Forum, held on 16 to 18 April under the theme, "Youth shaping sustainable and innovative solutions: Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of crises", and the participation of youth at the Commission on the Status of Women, including the high-level political forums, are welcome visible representations of intergenerational engagement in a United Nations system-wide approach.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, South Africa is encouraged by the efforts of the Youth Office in the areas of youth, peace and security and its role in the work currently under way in the Pact for the Future. Our delegation looks forward with great anticipation to the Summit of the Future Action Days, particularly Youth Action Day, which will be held on 20 September, before the Summit. The now established Youth Office is an affirmation that the youth are not just our future, but our present. They are officially in the house and clearly open for business. As they often say, "Nothing about us without us", let us continue the intergenerational work.

Mr. Mohamed (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Egypt's delegation takes note of the second report (A/78/949) of the United Nations Youth Office on its activities, submitted pursuant to resolution 76/306, and welcomes the appointment of the first Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs. This ushers in the implementation of the international consensus of the General Assembly, when it adopted the aforementioned resolution in September 2022. The resolution stressed the need to promote the youth agenda in the United Nations while enhancing its institutional effort to meet the aspirations of world youth. In the same context, my delegation notes the limited time available between the issuance of the report and the convening

of this meeting. Egypt asks that this be taken into account in the preparation of future reports, which must be available well before the corresponding meeting, guaranteeing sufficient time to study them and take stock of the latest activities of the Office.

Egypt was pleased to work with Guyana in facilitating consultations on the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office, which aims to enhance communication with youth. It allows hearing their voices in order to advance international efforts under the three pillars of the Organization's work — peace and security, development and human rights. In that context, we would like to share our vision on how to strengthen the role of the Office to achieve said objectives. That is particularly true as the General Assembly currently consults on chapter IV, concerning youth and future generations in the Pact for the Future, to be adopted in September.

First, we must increase investment in education; in scientific, academic exchange and skills acquisition programmes; and in sharing experiences with young people in developing countries. We must also increase the number of scholarships for young people to enhance their skills and boost their employment opportunities.

Secondly, we must increase opportunities for the employment and training of young people, especially from developing countries, in various Secretariat departments and United Nations programmes and funds. That can also be achieved through increasing the funding allocated to the United Nations Youth Fund, an important proposition that is being negotiated in the drafting of the Pact and was endorsed in resolution 78/179.

Thirdly, it is important to build on the complementary relationship between migration and development and to strengthen the regular paths of migration in a manner consistent with the demographic realities and labour market requirements. We need mechanisms that guarantee young people safe migration. They should also maximize their positive role in achieving sustainable development in the countries of origin and destination. That is of importance with the approach of the second International Migration Review Forum, to be held in 2026.

These issues were all advocated by the Group of African States in their negotiating position in chapter IV of the Pact for the Future. We also affirmed two pivotal points. The first is the need to eliminate all

forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. We also called for the immediate start of restoring cultural property and historical monuments to their original countries. That would promote the ability of young people and future generations to enjoy their cultural rights. Egypt hopes that the Youth Office, once fully established, will have a strong voice in advancing these pressing issues for young people, especially in developing countries. We hope that it will continue its endeavours to convey the voice of the youth of the world to the United Nations.

In conclusion, Egypt remains committed to enhancing youth participation and its empowerment, increasing programmes aimed at advancing their capabilities and qualifying them for the labour market, as well as increasing the number of youth appointed to leadership positions. Egypt has also established the World Youth Forum as an important venue for young people from different countries of the world to exchange views and ideas on the topics of peace, development and creativity.

Mrs. Patel (India): At the outset, we extend our sincere gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for convening this important discussion. We also congratulate the newly appointed Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs.

India welcomes the Secretary-General's report (A/78/949), on the progress and activities of the United Nations Youth Office, established by resolution 76/306. We take note of the efforts to enhance youth engagement and operationalize the mandate. Inclusivity remains central to the mandate of the United Nations Youth Office. Equally important is adhering to the principles set out by the General Assembly and ensuring that the voices of youth from all regions are represented. We particularly emphasize the importance of amplifying the voices of youth from the global South in the activities of the United Nations Youth Office. Their unique challenges and perspectives must be integrated into the work of the United Nations, and their participation should be actively supported in order to ensure that their contributions are fully recognized. To achieve genuine inclusivity, the Youth Office must strive for geographical balance in its activities and representation. All regions should see their youth represented, with their specific issues addressed, reflecting the diverse global realities.

Furthermore, gender balance is essential in all the Youth Office's endeavours. Young women and girls must have equal opportunities to participate and lead, as gender equality is crucial for sustainable development. The Youth Office should champion a more equitable and inclusive global youth agenda.

India, with more than 250 million individuals between the ages of 18 and 30, has the world's largest youth population. Our young people, imbued with democratic values and diverse aspirations, are driving the India success story. Initiatives like "make in India and start up India" empower them to become entrepreneurs and innovators. Our start-up ecosystem, the world's third largest, has created 1.25 million jobs and is valued at over \$350 billion. Indian youth also contribute significantly to science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields globally.

India will continue to support inclusive growth and youth-centred policies in the United Nations system for a prosperous and innovative future. We reiterate our support for Youth 2030: The United Nations Strategy on Youth, and for empowering our youth to become global leaders and change makers.

Ms. Van Der Sar (Kingdom of the Netherlands): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the European Union.

On behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, I would like to join others in sharing our positive reflection on the first year of the United Nations Youth Office in its role leading engagement and advocacy on youth issues across the United Nations.

Now that it is fully established on stable financial footing, we are hopeful for continued concrete action to be taken, guided by the United Nations Youth Strategy. The Youth Office can count on support from the Netherlands in line with its Youth at Heart strategy. We have therefore welcomed the appointment of Dr. Felipe Paullier Olivera as the Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs and commend the role that he has played

since his appointment in making youth more visible at the United Nations, including at the upcoming Summit of the Future.

In the light of our support also for the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, we would like to mention the importance of the work of the Youth Office on young persons with disabilities and its involvement with the Youth Compact. We further applaud the Youth Office leading by example by inaugurating its first youth core group as a sounding board. While at the same time we take note of the interim review of the Youth Strategy's conclusion, expressing the need to strengthen policies and processes for meaningful youth engagement at all levels. The Netherlands therefore hopes that the further mainstreaming of such mechanisms throughout the entire United Nations system will continue to be given priority. We believe that the Pact for the Future will be pivotal in that regard.

Lastly, my delegation welcomes the role of the Office's leadership in advancing the youth, peace and security agendas. We encourage the Office to continue and accelerate those efforts, in line with the recommendations of the most recent report of the Secretary-General on youth and peace and security (S/2024/207) from this spring and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, we cannot stress enough the positive impact of the United Nations Youth Office as a champion of the youth agenda and call on all Member States to continue and, where possible, increase support for the Office, including financial support to fulfil its important mandate. Peace, justice and development can be achieved only with the meaningful inclusion of the voices of young people around the world at all levels.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 130.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.