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Official Records

**64**<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting

Wednesday, 16 April 2025, 10 a.m.

New York

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*President:* Mr. Yang ..... (Cameroon)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Kössler (Austria), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

## Agenda item 13 (continued)

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

#### **Draft resolution (A/79/L.64)**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Congo to introduce draft resolution A/79/L.64.

**Mr. Makayat-Safouesse (Congo)** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Uzbekistan, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/79/L.64, entitled “United Nations Decade for Afforestation and Reforestation in line with Sustainable Forest Management (2027–2036)”.

At the outset, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all delegations for their constructive engagement in the informal consultations that we carried out and for their important contributions, which greatly enriched the draft resolution. Their collective efforts to bring together everyone’s views and concerns and the flexibility they demonstrated in order to reach a consensus text are to be commended.

Initiated by the President of my country, Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, on the occasion of the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in November 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, and endorsed by the African Union, the draft resolution that we are introducing this morning is aimed at promoting universal participation in afforestation and reforestation activities with a view to curbing climate change. As we know from recent United Nations Environment Programme estimates, we lose approximately 10 million hectares of forests every year. On another note, the global

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population is constantly growing, resulting in a significant increase in the needs of populations, which implicitly causes a worrisome loss of our forests.

Faced with that alarming situation, afforestation and reforestation, through forest plantations and agroforestry, offer a double advantage. On the one hand, it will allow us not only to compensate for the loss of our natural forests, but also to ensure that people can have the goods and services provided by forests. This is therefore a life-saving initiative that solves both environmental and economic problems. On the other hand, it will help all countries to create carbon sinks, in a context that calls for ecosystems that sequester atmospheric carbon. In view of the hardships and other natural disasters that we are experiencing increasingly frequently today, there is an urgent need to optimize global capacity for carbon sequestration. Increasing the world's forested area by creating new forests is the way to go about that.

From that perspective, it goes without saying that the draft resolution that we are introducing deals with an issue that concerns us all, as it has a dimension that transcends our national situations. In its operative paragraphs, the draft resolution presents the following three essential points.

First, it seeks to proclaim the period 2027–2036 as the United Nations Decade for Afforestation and Reforestation. The aim is to raise global awareness through political will and to mobilize action at all levels to halt and reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide.

Secondly, the draft invites the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests to facilitate the celebration of the decade.

Thirdly, within its mandate and available resources, the United Nations Forum on Forests is called to consider the role and contribution of the decade to sustainable forest management, while ensuring that all activities resulting from the implementation of the draft resolution will be funded by voluntary contributions.

In conclusion, we appeal to the Member States to support the draft resolution, the essential purpose of which is to provide a nature-based solution to a challenge that we all face today, namely, climate change. We look forward to the consensual adoption of this important draft resolution. We therefore invite those delegations that have not yet done so to support the draft resolution by co-sponsoring it.

**The Acting President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/79/L.64.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Ms. Sharma** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become co-sponsors of A/79/L.64: Algeria, Armenia, Austria, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Finland, the Gambia, Guatemala, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Latvia, Lesotho, Libya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, the Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, the Niger, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Suriname, the Syrian Arab Republic, Timor Leste, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

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

I now give the floor to the representative of the United States.

**Mr. Heartney** (United States of America): As President Trump and Secretary Rubio have both said, the United States strongly supports sensible environmental protections, including efforts to sustainably manage forests. However, draft resolution A/79/L.64 includes problematic elements that led us to call for a vote on it today. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals advance a programme of soft global governance that is inconsistent with United States sovereignty and adverse to the rights and interests of Americans. The United States will no longer reaffirm them as a matter of course.

While we will not ignore threats to our natural environment, President Trump has been clear that the Government of the United States must first and foremost refocus on the interests of Americans. The climate references in the draft resolution are an unnecessary distraction from addressing critical forest management issues. In addition, the draft resolution recalls the Paris Agreement, from which the United States has announced its withdrawal, consistent with Executive Order 14162, on “Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements”.

The United States remains concerned about the proliferation of international days, years and decades. We recognize that any costs that arise from the implementation of the draft resolution would be voluntary. However, in a world that faces many challenges, funding and efforts should be allocated to critical causes and crises, rather than to international days. Furthermore, the draft resolution exemplifies the problematic trend of excessively lengthy resolutions.

Finally, the United States underscores the importance of regulatory and other legal environments that support innovation. The United States understands that references to the dissemination of technology and the transfer of, or access to, technology are to voluntary technology transfer on mutually agreed terms and that all references to access to information and/or knowledge are to information or knowledge that is made available with the authorization of the legitimate holder.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/79/L.64, entitled “United Nations Decade for Afforestation and Reforestation in line with Sustainable Forest Management (2027–2036)”.

A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro,

Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

*Against:*

United States of America

*Abstaining:*

None

*Draft resolution A/79/L.64 was adopted by 155 votes to 1 (resolution 79/283).*

[Subsequently, the delegations of Tajikistan, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

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

**Ms. Garbacz (Poland):** It is my honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Montenegro, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, as well as San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

Let me begin by expressing our sincere appreciation to Mr. Makayat-Safouesse of the Republic of the Congo and Mr. Oybek Eshkobilov of Uzbekistan for facilitating the negotiations and to the Secretariat for its support.

The EU and its member States consider it crucial to sustain our collective efforts under the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and to adopt a holistic approach to ecosystem conservation and restoration that covers all ecosystems. Within that framework, we thank the proponents for their initiative to specifically strengthen global action aimed at halting the loss of forest cover through conservation and restoration efforts in line with sustainable forest management. We recognize that sustainable forest management is a dynamic and evolving concept that helps to balance the ecological, economic and social functions of forests, thereby contributing to all three dimensions of sustainable development. We also stress the important role that forests play in the fight against biodiversity loss and climate change, including through enhanced climate mitigation and adaptation measures.

The European Union and its member States therefore wish to reaffirm the fundamental importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement in any discussion related to forests. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process and the stand-alone Paris agreement remain the primary multilateral tools at our disposal with which to combat global warming. The Paris legacy has led to major breakthroughs — one of them being the decision, taken at the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to transition away from fossil fuels. Ten years after the adoption of the Paris agreement, the EU recalls the importance of multilateralism in response to global challenges.

We regret that consensus could not be achieved on resolution 79/283, despite the remarkable efforts made by delegations throughout the negotiations to achieve

consensus. We therefore wish to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to ensuring that the health, vitality and resilience of forests and other ecosystems, which remains a global priority, recognizing also their essential role in achieving a sustainable and climate-resilient future for all.

**Mr. Napurí Pita** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Out of all the countries in the world, Peru has the ninth highest forest cover, the fourth-highest tropical forest cover and the second highest Amazon forest cover. Moreover, Peru has a large area of degraded forest land, where we prioritize reforestation and ecosystem restoration efforts, through forest plantations and agroforestry systems. We also recognize the importance of afforestation and reforestation as key strategies for climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, combating desertification and sustainable development. As a member of the Bureau of the twentieth and twenty-first sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, Peru has defended the need to promote coherent forestry action aligned with existing international frameworks.

Regarding the resolution adopted today (resolution 79/283), Peru would like to express some considerations.

First, the international community already has the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030), the scope of which includes degraded forests. In that context, Peru would have preferred to explore other alternatives, such as the proclamation of an international year, which would ensure better alignment with the frameworks that are already in place.

Secondly, the proclamation of a new decade can entail additional expectations in terms of implementation and coordination. In that regard, Peru considers it essential for the costs arising from this initiative be covered exclusively by voluntary contributions and for any mandatory financial burden on States and reporting schemes on the implementation of the decade to be avoided.

Thirdly, experience has shown that the proclamation of long-term initiatives, such as a United Nations decade, requires a detailed analysis of their practical feasibility and real impact. We therefore insist that the implementation of this decade must respect the deadlines and procedures established in resolution 1980/67 of the Economic and Social Council in order to ensure effective planning and the participation of all Member States, entities of the United Nations system and other interested parties.

In that context, despite our initial reservations, Peru chose to vote in favour of resolution 79/283. That decision is in line with our desire to maintain a constructive spirit in multilateral dialogue, especially in environmental matters, without necessarily implying active support or the assumption of new obligations by the Peruvian State under the new decade.

Lastly, we thank the co-proponents of this initiative — the Permanent Representations of the Congo and Uzbekistan to the United Nations — for their openness to considering our concerns during the course of the consultations, and we reiterate our broad commitment to the sustainable management of forests. Peru will continue to work in multilateral forums to ensure that any international initiative contributes effectively to the conservation and restoration of our forest ecosystems, without duplicating efforts or creating burdens for developing countries.

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

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 13.

**Agenda item 17** (*continued*)**Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development****Draft decision (A/79/L.72)****Draft amendment (A/79/L.77)**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Poland to introduce draft amendment A/79/L.77.

**Mrs. Benson** (Poland): I have the honour to introduce draft amendment A/79/L.77 on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

The European Union attaches paramount importance to ensuring inclusive and transparent intergovernmental processes, which are open to all stakeholders, including from civil society, academic institutions and the private sector. That applies fully to the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. The active participation of all stakeholders will be in the interest of the legitimacy of the Conference, contribute to reaching an ambitious outcome and ensure that this intergovernmental process will benefit from the expertise and commitment of a wide variety of stakeholders. That is especially welcome given the complex and multifaceted nature of the topic of financing for development and the need to mobilize all of society to deliver on that important agenda. In that vein, the EU and its member States believe that the potential exclusion of relevant stakeholders that have already been approved by the President of the General Assembly and meet the criteria set out by the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development NGO committee should be for the General Assembly to decide upon. It is not acceptable for individual Member States to veto certain organizations.

To that end, the EU member States have put forward this draft amendment to the decision on the participation in the Conference of civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector. The aim is to include anew the excluded organizations that have submitted relevant and legitimate requests to participate but have been rejected by individual Member States — without any rationale, or worse, for purely political reasons. The amendment is therefore in line with the spirit and the letter of the General Assembly's decision to have a process in which all relevant stakeholders can participate. We thank all delegations that have already supported our amendment, and we call on all United Nations Member States that have not done so, to also express their support.

**The Acting President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/79/L.72 and draft amendment A/79/L.77.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Ms. Sharma** (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 the draft amendment: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, the Marshall Islands, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Moldova, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

**The Acting 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 to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Setu-Galo** (United Kingdom): We were glad to see that language on civil society participation was included in the modalities resolutions 78/271 and 78/273, on the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. This allows for meaningful civil society participation in this important conference. These modalities allow us to see the rationale for objections to the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). That transparency is essential to ensuring that the Conference will include voices from a range of experts in the field of financing for development, and we are grateful that the language has given the decision-making power back to the Assembly rather than to any single Member State.

However, we regret that Member States continue to use the non-objection basis to attempt to block NGOs from other countries on a political basis. This essentially amounts to a veto to NGO participation. We are concerned that, even given that language, those objecting have not provided rationale for the blocks. The non-objection basis does not have to be the norm of the General Assembly and, indeed, it is no longer the norm.

The financing for development process has a long history of strong civil society participation from civil society organizations, NGOs, academia and the private sector. They are our eyes and ears on the ground and their contributions help improve our decision-making and enrich our evidence base, making United Nations action more effective and more substantial — critically, helping it have the impact that we need to see for the people who need it most. We believe it is crucial that civil society organizations be granted wide participation to the Conference. Their input is critical on this important topic. It would be a disservice to not take advantage of all the tools we have. That includes partnerships with civil society.

**Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Our delegation would like to once again draw attention to the contradictory language concerning the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in United Nations international conferences. Such decisions should be taken on the basis of the non-objection principle, otherwise they lose all meaning. Unfortunately, a number of States believed that such issues should be resolved through a vote, placing their own political interests above those of others.

The financing for development agenda, including international conferences on this topic, is a depoliticized platform where representatives of countries, together with other stakeholders, can openly discuss pressing global challenges and seek solutions to them.

We believe that other Member States that have taken issue with the list of NGOs that requested to participate in the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development were guided by good intentions and the desire to shield the Conference from the destructive agendas of said NGOs and their attempts to unnecessarily politicize the discussion. Unfortunately, the patrons that fund the destructive activities of such NGOs, by introducing draft amendment A/79/L.77, tried to upset the balance struck in the financing for development debate.

We ask all Member States that support the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the intergovernmental nature of our Organization to vote against the proposed amendment. Our decision is rooted in the desire to preserve the neutral and constructive nature of the Conference.

In response to the comments made by colleagues speaking before me that Member States have not presented a rationale for excluding such NGOs from participating in the Conference, I note that our delegation did submit the necessary

rationale and expressed it just now in this very statement. In addition, from our understanding, in contrast with what the representative of the European Union said, not all of the organizations were placed back on the list of organizations participating in the Conference.

We are counting on the support of all Member States.

**Mr. Frey** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland renews its firm commitment to the inclusive and meaningful participation of civil society in the proceedings leading up to the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. We are convinced that the contribution of civil society organizations is essential in order to guarantee open, informed and representative reflection and to ensure the relevance and impact of the outcomes of the Conference. We believe that the decision on the participation of civil society organizations at the Conference should fall to the General Assembly in the spirit of transparency and multilateral legitimacy, rather than being a unilateral decision. For those reasons, Switzerland supports draft amendment A/79/L.77, submitted by the European Union.

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

Before we proceed to take a decision on draft decision A/79/L.72, in accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the Assembly shall first take a decision on draft amendment A/79/L.77.

A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tonga, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Zambia

*Against:*

Azerbaijan, Belarus, Cameroon, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Sudan, Türkiye

*Abstaining:*

Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Chad, Congo, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Gambia, Guyana, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Yemen

*Draft amendment A/79/L.77 was adopted by 72 votes to 13, with 49 abstentions.*



[Subsequently, the delegation of Mali informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote against.]

**The Acting President:** Since draft amendment A/79/L.77 was adopted, we shall proceed to take action on draft decision A/79/L.72, as amended.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft decision A/79/L.72, entitled “Participation of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector in the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development”, as amended.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt decision A/79/L.72, as amended?

*Draft decision A/79/L.72, as amended, was adopted (decision 79/548 B).*

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

**Mr. Assadi Nazari** (Islamic Republic of Iran): We wish to underscore the importance for developing countries of the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. We fully recognize the meaningful and constructive role that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play in advancing development outcomes. Their engagement enhances public participation and often serves as a catalyst for innovation in mobilizing resources for development.

However, with reference to the current list of proposed NGOs under this agenda item, we regret to note that a number of the entities included do not appear to demonstrate a clear or substantive link to the financing for development framework. Their inclusion may risk diverting focus and undermining the credibility of this important process.

In the light of those concerns and despite our firm support for the engagement of relevant NGOs in development cooperation, we were not in a position to support the list as presented and therefore cast a negative vote on draft amendment A/79/L.77. We hope that future efforts will ensure the application of the principle of non-objection in a more consistent and transparent manner.

**Ms. İstemil Aydi** (Türkiye): Türkiye is strongly committed to supporting the active participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector in the work of the United Nations, in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

However, we would like to highlight our strong position on the adopted amendment proposal, as well as the attempts of some groups of countries to violate the non-objection principle. Türkiye supports only the NGOs and other stakeholders whose activities will contribute to the ongoing preparations for the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. We are not supportive of NGOs that are engaged in activities that run counter to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and engage in politically motivated acts against some Member States.

Unfortunately, we have encountered numerous cases where even consultative status and participation in various United Nations meetings were abused by certain organizations, leading to the unnecessary polarization of discussions and making it difficult to achieve constructive dialogue and consensus.

Unfortunately, the amendment proposed today allows a group of Member States to override valid objections without an adequate understanding or scrutiny of the activities of those NGOs, thereby transforming this matter into a potentially politicized one. As a matter of fact, the proponents of the amendment do not have

detailed information on the objectives, activities and financing of the NGOs objected to by certain Member States. Furthermore, no proper justification has been given by the proponents of the amendment and no grounds presented as to why all the NGOs and stakeholders objected to would be critical to the work of the preparative process of the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the Conference itself. As a matter of fact, for the purposes of transparency and informed decision-making, we would have preferred to be informed, in detail, of how those NGOs and stakeholders plan to contribute to the Conference.

Furthermore, we would like to be informed why the proponents of the amendment wish to place back on the list only 38 of the 50 NGOs objected to by several Member States, rather than all 50. We would very much like to hear the rationale behind that limited amendment.

Given these unfortunate circumstances, we consider the amendment to be political rather than technical and, therefore, voted against it. Türkiye will continue to underline that the views and concerns of the relevant Member States should be respected when determining the participation of relevant NGOs in the work of the United Nations in order to prevent the abuse of the United Nations platform for political purposes. We will therefore continue to advocate that either the criteria and principles formulated in Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 be applied to all NGOs that seek to participate in the conferences and meetings of the United Nations or that the non-objection principle be respected.

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

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 17.

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

#### **Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations**

##### **(1) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg to introduce draft resolution A/79/L.75.

**Mr. Maes** (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of Luxembourg, as current Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and Lithuania, as the previous Chair, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/79/L.75, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe".

I would like to thank the 46 Member States that have joined Lithuania and Luxembourg as co-sponsors.

First adopted by the General Assembly during its fifty-fifth session, on 20 October 2000 (resolution 55/3), this biennial resolution has traditionally been adopted by consensus. It reflects the wide-ranging cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe shares with the United Nations many fields of mutual interest, which are reflected in the draft resolution.

Today, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is more important than ever. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe is characterized by a long tradition and a shared vision of the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, of democracy and the rule of law — all of which are facing unprecedented challenges. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the delegations that engaged actively during the consultations, which were open to all Member States. As co-facilitators, Lithuania and

Luxembourg sought to conduct inclusive negotiations by organizing several rounds of informal consultations, in addition to bilateral and smaller group discussions.

We reverted to previously agreed language on a number of points. We regret that the language that has been used in biennial resolutions for many years, including on gender, was called into question during the consultations. Nevertheless, we believe that the draft presented today reflects a balanced compromise. In order to ensure the support of the vast majority of delegations, we showed flexibility and removed key elements from the draft resolution that had been approved by the Council of Europe membership in Strasbourg.

From the beginning of the consultations, it became clear that several paragraphs referring to the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine were problematic for one delegation. However, those references represent a significant part of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe. For example, the draft resolution acknowledges the establishment by the Council of Europe of the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the statute of which refers to resolution ES-11/5, adopted by the Assembly on 14 November 2022, entitled “Furtherance of remedy and reparation for aggression against Ukraine”.

In the same vein, the situation of children in Ukraine is a matter of shared concern to both organizations. The language used in the draft resolution is general and should not be considered contentious.

I would like to seize this opportunity to thank my colleague, Ambassador Rytis Paulauskas, Permanent Representative of Lithuania; our Deputy Permanent Representatives, Anne Dostert and Aleksas Dambrauskas; as well as our experts, Marianna Palmini and Orinta Znojewaite; for the excellent teamwork in preparing this draft resolution. Despite all of our efforts and the constructive engagement of many delegations, we will have to submit this draft resolution to a vote here today. That is very regrettable as the resolution is usually adopted by consensus. Regional cooperation with a focus on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law should not divide us, but rather unite us.

I therefore call on all Member States to support the draft resolution and to vote in favour of it.

**The Acting President:** We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/79/L.75.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Ms. Sharma** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Cabo Verde, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu.

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

I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

**Ms. Mardenskaia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation cannot support draft resolution A/79/L.75, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, in its current form.

As was stated earlier, up until 2023, this resolution has been adopted by consensus, which is generally justified for documents on United Nations cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. As regional organizations are meant to complement United Nations efforts within their area of responsibility and mandate, such interaction is an integral element of the current international agenda.

The sponsors of this draft, just as they did two years ago, opted for another course — a destructive one — by including totally inappropriate politicized language, specifically in the ninth and eleventh preambular paragraphs and operational paragraphs 5 and 17, which is unrelated to the subject matter of the draft resolution. This is a clear attempt to project the relationship between the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe, which is in deep crisis, onto the Council of Europe's cooperation with the United Nations. We also will not comment on the anti-Russian insinuations contained in the text.

This is yet another convincing demonstration of the double standards of certain countries, which primarily seek to achieve their narrow national interests or bloc goals. They sacrificed the credibility of the Council of Europe long ago. It would appear that the United Nations is next in line. They are not in the least embarrassed by the fact that their actions are deepening the already existing dividing lines in the General Assembly and deliberately sowing division that could and should have been avoided. It is through their efforts that the Council of Europe has turned into a platform for promoting pseudolegal and legally nugatory initiatives such as the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the special tribunal on the crime of aggression against Ukraine. Therefore, the Council of Europe has definitively lost its independence. Furthermore, they needed the draft resolution on cooperation with the United Nations only to keep afloat their dubious claims to the sovereign assets of the Russian Federation.

We voiced those concerns on numerous occasions during consultations on the draft resolution. Despite that, our former European partners decided to ignore those concerns and to go down the path of confrontation. But what can I say? It is their choice. They will have to answer for its consequences. They will have to answer to their people. We believe that this draft resolution is deeply flawed. That is why we have called for a vote. We call on everyone who is not indifferent to the reputation of the United Nations to vote against it.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/79/L.75, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe".

A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand,

Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Zambia

*Against:*

Belarus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Mali, Nicaragua, Niger, Russian Federation, Sudan, United States of America

*Abstaining:*

Algeria, Bahrain, Brazil, China, Cuba, Egypt, Gambia, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Togo, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

*Draft resolution A/79/L.75 was adopted by 105 votes to 9, with 33 abstentions (resolution 79/284).*

[Subsequently, the delegation of North Macedonia informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour of; the delegations of Bangladesh and Ethiopia informed the Secretariat that they had intended to abstain.]

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

**Mr. Shrier** (United States of America): As an observer State to the Council of Europe, the United States values the work of the Council of Europe to protect and defend human rights, advance democracy and promote the rule of law. We appreciate the efforts of Lithuania and Luxembourg on this resolution (resolution 79/284), including their willingness to accept some changes to the text.

Maintaining international peace and security, including through the peaceful settlement of disputes, is the primary goal for which the United Nations was created. The current resolution repeats statements pertaining to the Russia-Ukraine war that the United States considers unhelpful in advancing the cause of peace. We are confident that a durable resolution to the Russia-Ukraine war is of the greatest importance to members of the Council of Europe, as it is to the United States. We hope that the Council of Europe and all States Members of the United Nations will support and reinforce efforts to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace between Russia and Ukraine.

The United States also takes this opportunity to denounce the Global Compact on Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees. They conflict not only with United States policy but with our common-sense duty to curtail, rather than to facilitate, the inherently destabilizing phenomenon of mass migration — arguably the defining challenge of this century. The unprecedented and growing scale of migration worldwide undermines the rule of law and social cohesion, empowers and enriches criminal organizations and encourages vulnerable people to gamble with their lives.

For too long, American communities have paid the price for the failed approach encapsulated in those two compacts. Under President Trump, that ends. The United States stands ready to lead the international community in forging new norms on migration. Their foundation must be a true respect for, rather than just lip service to, sovereignty and the rule of law as governing principles, while recognizing the

authority of every State to decide who will be admitted into its borders and on what terms. As Vice-President Vance stressed during his remarks in Munich earlier this year, Europe faces grave challenges in that area. We as Governments owe it to our citizens to protect them — and intending migrants themselves — from the mounting costs of a failed migration regime.

Another concern we have about this resolution is its reaffirmation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Although framed in neutral language, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs advance a programme of soft global governance that is inconsistent with United States sovereignty and adverse to the rights and interests of Americans. All countries should be similarly wary of such an affront to sovereignty.

Lastly, this text makes frequent references to upholding democracy and democratic principles. It is important to not only talk about democratic values, but also to live by them. Some Member States supporting this text have suppressed political parties with whom they disagree at home. Those ideological differences should be decided at the ballot box, not in the courtroom. The exclusion of people from the political process is particularly concerning, given the aggressive and corrupt lawfare waged against President Trump in the United States. Such lawfare has no place in our societies. We support the right of everyone to offer their views in the public square.

**Mr. Gaal** (Hungary): Regarding the recently adopted resolution on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe (resolution 79/284), we would like to thank Lithuania and Luxembourg for the negotiations during the past months. As a member State of the Council of Europe, Hungary voted in favour of the resolution, but we would like to add the following remarks.

First of all, Hungary remains dedicated to its human rights commitments and to combating all forms of violence against women and domestic violence. However, we stressed that the Hungarian National Assembly decided not to include in the Hungarian national legal system the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention. Hungary maintains that paragraph 19 of the present resolution, which invites States that have not yet done so to consider signing or ratifying the Istanbul Convention, cannot be interpreted as a commitment to signing or ratifying that convention.

Hungary would also like to reiterate its position on the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy. We interpret the term gender as a reference to biological sex and gender equality as the provision of equal opportunities for women and men. That male/female approach is a binary approach supported by Hungary, and we do not accept other concepts that reflect non-binary approaches to the issue. We also underlined the absence of international consensus on the legal definition of the term "sexual and reproductive health and rights". Therefore, no legal precedent can stem from the adoption of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024–2029 regarding the interpretation of that term. Furthermore, regarding preambular paragraph 9, we wish to emphasize that Hungary chose to abstain from joining the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the core group tasked with establishing a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. We support ensuring accountability for war criminals through the current international institutional framework.

Finally, Hungary remains firmly opposed to illegal migration. We must underline that the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, both mentioned in paragraph 20, include elements that are



incompatible with our national position. For that reason, Hungary did not support those initiatives and does not participate in their implementation.

**Mr. Gueye** (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Senegal is grateful to Liechtenstein and Lithuania for their work in negotiating this resolution (resolution 79/284), which continues to highlight cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe, including on matters of mutual interest, such as the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

In that regard, the delegation of Senegal would like to recall that Senegal understands the concept of gender and all terms potentially associated thereto to refer only to the social relations between men and women. As a result, my delegation wishes to disassociate itself from all language contained in this resolution that runs counter to that understanding. That includes, but is not limited to, the following formulations:

(*spoke in English*)

“multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination”, “all women and girls”, “all human rights and fundamental freedoms”, “gender-responsive societies”, “significant contribution” in paragraph 19 and “recognizes the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030”.

(*spoke in French*)

Those expressions and all those relating to or stemming from them in any way, shape or form still do not meet with the approval of Senegal.

**Ms. Minh T Vu** (Viet Nam): The delegation of Viet Nam wishes to explain its position on the resolution entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe”, which was just adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 79/284).

As a matter of long-standing principle, Viet Nam is a steadfast proponent of enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. We regard such collaboration as vital to strengthening multilateralism and advancing our shared goals of promoting peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. In line with that commitment, my delegation has consistently supported and voted in favour of relevant resolutions submitted under this agenda item, including the resolutions concerning cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe that were adopted in the past and today by the Assembly. On the other hand, regrettably, my delegation disassociates itself from the ninth and eleventh preambular paragraphs and from paragraphs 5 and 17 of the current text, as we believe that the content of those paragraphs falls outside the scope of cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

**Mr. Nazari** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I take the floor to explain the position of my country on the resolution entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe” (resolution 79/284).

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the outstanding efforts made by my colleagues in the Permanent Missions of Lithuania and Luxembourg in co-facilitating the review of today’s resolution. I would also like to reaffirm our strong support for upholding the technical character of United Nations resolutions pertaining to cooperation with regional organizations. The Charter of the United Nations recognizes the importance of cooperation with regional organizations. Chapter VIII of the Charter promotes such cooperation in the service of the purposes and principles of the Charter by giving a special place to regional organizations. In that regard, my delegation has actively engaged in informal meetings aimed at bridging the existing gaps, including with regard to addressing the ongoing conflicts in Europe.

We regret that the co-facilitators were unable to refrain from using language perceived as confrontational, which risks further deepening divisions within the General Assembly. The recently adopted resolution contains certain references that are unacceptable to us, as they contradict the long-standing position of my delegation on the Ukrainian conflict and violate principles of the Charter, such as sovereign immunity and the equality of States, setting a dangerous precedent and creating legal uncertainty in international relations

With regard to the ninth and eleventh preambular paragraphs of the resolution and to paragraphs 5 and 17, I take this opportunity to reiterate my delegation's principled position on the need for the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with international law, and to underline the need for full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States. We firmly believe that, in order to find long-term and substantial solutions to such crises, it is necessary to address their root causes. The inclusion of those paragraphs in the present resolution is beyond the technical scope of the resolution, which is intended solely to address cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe in the light of Chapter VIII of the Charter. Moreover, any action taken through the United Nations should be in full accordance with the Charter and generally contribute to the de-escalation of the situation.

The Islamic Republic of Iran rejects all attempts leading to political isolation, unilateral sanctions or pressures and all provocative measures, which will only aggravate the situation and make it more complicated and difficult to resolve. We also categorically reject all desperate attempts to question the impartiality of my country in such conflicts arising from geopolitical rivalries.

Finally, while we call for compliance with the agreement on relations without widening its interpretation, my delegation would like to refer to its observation regarding the functioning of the European Court of Human Rights and the commitment of the Council of Europe to the promotion of democratic institutions. We reiterate that the functioning of that regional organization and cooperation between the two organizations must be based on common international values and be in full compliance with international law, the Charter and full respect for sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in the internal and international affairs of the States Members of the United Nations.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize that my delegation reserves its position on non-consensual and controversial language used throughout the text, including, but not limited to, "multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination", as reflected in paragraph 3.

For the reasons mentioned, my delegation abstained in the voting on the resolution as a whole.

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

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (I) of agenda item 125?

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.*