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New York

President: Mr. Yang (Cameroon)

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

Tribute to the memory of His Holiness Pope Francis

The President: It is my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of His Holiness Pope Francis, who passed away on Monday, 21 April 2025.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to convey our condolences to the people of the Holy See and all Catholics around the world. I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Holiness Pope Francis.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: Today we mourn the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis while honouring and remembering his enduring legacy. To the faithful around the world, Pope Francis was more than the leader of the Catholic Church. He was a moral voice and a global conscience. With humility and courage, he championed the dignity of the marginalized, the poor and the voiceless.

We recall his historic address to this General Assembly in 2015 (see A/70/PV.3). In it, he reminded us that the pursuit of common good must guide all our actions, whether in politics, economics or diplomacy. He urged all nations to rise above self-interest and to act in solidarity with future generations. His Holiness never ceased to remind us that human dignity is a collective responsibility, that our lives are bound together, that no one should be excluded from the fruits of human progress and that we must not allow anyone to remain on the margins of society or in poverty.

Today we pay tribute not only to the head of the Catholic Church, but also to a man whose compassion crossed borders and transcended faiths. As we grieve at his passing, let us honour his memory not only through words but through action. Let us strive to build a world that reflects the values he lived by, namely, humility, justice, mercy and hope. May His Holiness Pope Francis rest in eternal peace. May his legacy inspire the Assembly to fulfil its highest calling to uphold the dignity and unity of everyone everywhere.

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I now give the floor to the His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: His Holiness Pope Francis was a man of faith and a bridge-builder among all faiths. He was a champion of the most marginalized people on earth. He was a voice of community in a world of division, a voice of mercy in a world of cruelty, a voice of peace in a world of war. And he was a steadfast friend of the United Nations, addressing Member States from this very rostrum in 2015. During that historic visit, he also spoke of our Organization's ideal of "a united human family, living in harmony, working not only for peace but in peace, working not only for justice but in a spirit of justice".

On behalf of our United Nations family, I extend my deepest condolences to the Catholic community and to so many others around the world grieving this tremendous loss.

Pope Francis was at the helm of the Roman Catholic Church for a dozen years, but that was preceded by decades of service and good works. As a young man, Pope Francis found his calling in the slums of Buenos Aires, where his dedication to serving the poor later earned him the title "Bishop of the Slums". These early experiences sharpened his conviction that faith must be an engine of action and change, and Pope Francis put that engine into overdrive as an unstoppable voice for social justice and equality. His 2020 encyclical, *Fratelli tutti*, drew a straight line between greed and poverty, hunger, inequality and suffering. While decrying the inequality that defines our globalized economy, he also warned against what he called the "globalization of indifference".

I will never forget the first official visit he undertook as Pope at a time when I served as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Pope Francis chose to go to the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa in 2013, to put a global spotlight on the desperate plight of asylum seekers and migrants. He warned against "the culture of comfort, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people". And on World Refugee Day last year, he called on all countries "to welcome, promote, accompany and integrate those who knock on our doors".

When I met him at the Vatican as Secretary-General in 2019, I was struck by his humanity and his humility. He always saw challenges through the eyes of those on the peripheries of life. And he said we can never look away from injustice and inequality or close our eyes to those suffering from conflict or acts of violence.

Always a pilgrim for peace, Pope Francis ventured to war-torn countries around the world, from Iraq to South Sudan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and beyond, decrying bloodshed and violence and pushing for reconciliation. He stood with conviction for innocents caught in war zones, such as Ukraine and Gaza. He did it with his global platform, but he also did it in much more personal and profound ways.

Every day, without fail, precisely at 7 p.m., he would quietly call the Church of the Holy Family in Gaza City. As someone at the Church said, "he would ask us how we were, what did we eat, did we have clean water, was anyone injured? It was never diplomatic or a matter of obligation. It was the questions a father asks their son".

And in his final message on Easter Sunday, Pope Francis underscored the vital importance of ending these conflicts.

(spoke in French)

Until the very end, Pope Francis embodied the appeal to justice for the people and for the planet. Thanks to his encyclical *Laudato si'*, published in 2015, he contributed to the adoption of the Paris Agreement by calling upon leaders to protect our common home. He also highlighted the clear links between environmental degradation and

the degradation of the human condition. Pope Francis understood that those that had contributed the least to the climate crisis suffered the worst consequences thereof and that we have the moral and spiritual duty to act.

(spoke in Spanish)

In today's world of division and discord, it is particularly significant that Pope Francis proclaimed 2025 as the year of hope. He was always a messenger of hope. Now it is incumbent upon all of us to carry this hope forward. At his funeral, on Saturday, I was deeply moved to see leaders of all religions and political colours unite in solidarity to honour the life and achievements of Pope Francis. What I saw was a rare spirit of unity and solemn reflection that we need now more than ever. Our world would be a much better place if we were to follow his example of unity, compassion and mutual understanding through our own words and actions. As we mourn the passing of Pope Francis, let us renew our commitment to peace, human dignity and social justice, causes to which he dedicated each and every moment of his extraordinary life.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Eritrea, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Ms. Tesfamariam (Eritrea): It is with profound respect that on behalf of the Group of African States, I pay tribute to His Holiness, the late Pope Francis, who passed away on Monday, 21 April 2025.

His Holiness the late Pope Francis leaves behind an important legacy through his major contributions to the development of the Roman Catholic Church and international humanitarian efforts throughout the world. The late Pope Francis' leadership and vision at home led to key advancements in many important areas. His efforts helped ensure the Roman Catholic Church enjoyed strong international engagement and partnership.

Pope Francis made significant contributions to Africa, including emphasizing the importance of the continent within the Catholic Church, advocating for peace and reconciliation in conflict-ridden areas and promoting a more decentralized and culturally relevant Catholicism. He also strengthened ties with African communities, demonstrated a deep connection with the continent's youth and encouraged African Catholics to develop their own unique approaches to pastoral life.

In past years, at a time when despair and uncertainty plagued countless throughout the world, Pope Francis dedicated himself to protecting the environment and promoting peaceful diplomacy with a strong voice. A man of deep faith and boundless compassion, he dedicated his life to uplifting the poor and calling for peace in a troubled world. Under his tenure, the Pope also strived to bring forward major contributions in regard to humanitarian issues, helping to improve the lives of people around the world. Pope Francis's legacy is his message of peace, reconciliation and solidarity that lives in the hearts of those he inspired. The Pope's efforts to promote dialogue, harmony and peace will always be remembered.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my sincere condolences to his bereaved family, the Roman Catholic Church and its followers.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of India, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Parvathaneni (India): The passing away of His Holiness Pope Francis, on 21 April 2025, is a moment of profound sadness, not only for the global Catholic community, but also for the whole world, which was inspired by his extraordinary life. Pope Francis was a once-in-a-generation leader. His message of service to humankind, love and humility transcended borders and touched so many. His life

devoted to peace, justice and human dignity, and his deep commitment towards all humans, especially the poor and the marginalized, is an inspiration and a testament to his enduring faith in the service of humankind.

The legacy of Pope Francis will be one of compassion. It will espouse service to humankind. It will motivate people of all faiths to live together in peace and harmony. His final Easter message encouraged us to believe in the principle of humanity in our daily actions. It reminds us that love can triumph over hatred, light over darkness, and truth over falsehood. Following his path will lead us to a more stable, peaceful and prosperous world.

The Asia-Pacific Group joins the whole world in mourning the passing of His Holiness, who will aptly be remembered as a people's pope, a source of spiritual strength and a beacon of hope and affection for millions around the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Pérez Ayestarán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honour to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Member States of which express their deepest sorrow following the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. Pope Francis was a committed shepherd, who our region held very dear, and his life and pontificate were marked among others by humility and a forward-looking vision of both social progress and social justice.

As the first pontiff from the Latin American and Caribbean region, Pope Francis was a transformative figure in the history of the Catholic Church and in the modern world as a whole. His election in 2013 was welcomed with hope by millions of Catholics, believers and even non-believers around the globe, given his skill in reconciliation and his skills as a tireless promoter of a culture of peace. His pontificate was distinguished by its message of simplicity, closeness to the poor and the excluded, and steadfast defence of human dignity.

As Latin Americans and Caribbeans, we feel particularly connected to his legacy. With his profound humanist spirit, he always advocated for the realization of Bolívar and San Martín's dream, the unity of our region, something that he himself defined as a prophecy, a longing for our peoples to unite around their sovereignty beyond ideologies and to mutually recognize and understand each other as essential components of our region, with a common identity and as brothers and sisters who embrace their diversity. We will always remember his wise words, and undoubtedly sooner rather than later we will fully realize this noble aspiration.

For more than a decade at the helm of the Catholic Church, His Holiness promoted interreligious dialogue, intercultural understanding and the care for our common home, advocating for a comprehensive ecology in his encyclical *Laudato si'*. With a deeply humanist and social vision, Pope Francis advocated for global peace, as well as for a fairer economy and for the fraternal welcome of migrants and a more open Church, one less focused on power and much more on service instead. His prophetic voice always reverberated across the globe, including in international forums, where he continuously called for peace, disarmament, cooperation among nations and a globalization that would not leave the most vulnerable groups behind. He was a staunch advocate of multilateralism as a means to address the shared challenges of humankind, and his spiritual leadership transcended borders, inspiring both believers and non-believers.

During his historic visit to the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, almost 10 years ago, during the adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, His

Holiness Pope Francis clearly emphasized the importance of this Organization and of the values enshrined in its founding Charter. On that solemn occasion, he stated

“When the Charter of the United Nations is respected and implemented with transparency and sincerity and without ulterior motives, as an obligatory point of reference for justice and not as a tool for concealing false intentions, peace can result. On the other hand, when a standard is seen simply as an instrument to be used when it produces the right results and to be avoided when it does not, we open a real Pandora’s box of uncontrollable forces that do serious harm to defenceless populations and to our cultural and biological environments.” (*A/70/PV.3, p. 5*)

His Holiness added:

“The praiseworthy international juridical framework of the United Nations and of all its activities, like any other human endeavour, can be improved, yet it remains necessary; at the same time, it can be the pledge of a secure and happy future for future generations. And so it will, if the representatives of States can set aside partisan and ideological interests and sincerely strive to serve the common good” (*ibid., p. 6*).

Pope Francis will be remembered as a moral leader of the twenty-first century, whose deep faith, commitment to justice and his preference for the poor left an indelible mark on our collective history. On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, we express our heartfelt condolences to the Holy See, to the people of Argentina, to the global Catholic community and to all those around the world who mourn today the physical passing of one of the great moral beacons of our time, a steadfast voice for human dignity and a tireless sower of hope.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Miller (Israel): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Today we mourn the passing of a remarkable spiritual leader, His Holiness Pope Francis, whose legacy has left an indelible mark on our world. On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, I would like to extend our sincere condolences to the Holy See, the Catholic Church and the millions of faithful around the globe. Our thoughts are with them during this solemn time.

Pope Francis dedicated his life to faith, peace and the service of humanity. He tirelessly worked to uphold the principles of compassion, unity and justice, advocating for the dignity and rights of all people. He was a shepherd of the Church, who led from the heart, who personified his teachings, which is why he was and will be known as the people’s Pope. His teachings emphasized love, humility, social justice and service to others, inspiring millions to live by these virtues. Pope Francis’ unwavering commitment to peace, compassion, human dignity, interfaith dialogue and global harmony strengthened the bonds between nations, cultures and religions, fostering understanding and cooperation in a world often divided. His moral leadership provided guidance in times of uncertainty, offering hope and solace to those in need, particularly the oppressed, the most vulnerable and the marginalized. Beyond his spiritual role, he championed humanitarian causes and the moral imperative to address environmental degradation.

Pope Francis was a beacon of hope and a symbol of resilience, whose impact will be felt for generations to come. He brought attention to the forgotten corners of society, shining a light on those whose voices often go unheard. As we bid farewell to him, let us honour his memory by continuing his mission of peace, justice and solidarity among all people. May his vision for a world rooted in love and compassion endure.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Ms. Shea (United States of America): Today we gather to pay tribute to a remarkable leader and a beacon of compassion, Pope Francis. His Holiness dedicated his life to the service of humanity, transcending borders, faiths and cultures, to promote a message of love, humility and solidarity.

We offer our deepest condolences to the Catholic faithful around the world, the Holy See and all those whose lives were enriched by Pope Francis's moral and spiritual leadership. Pope Francis served as a spiritual guide to more than 1 billion Catholics worldwide, including more than 50 million in the United States. From the outset of his papacy, the United States worked closely with Pope Francis. Americans remember well his visit to our country in 2015, during which he touched the lives of many.

The Pope's efforts to promote interreligious dialogue created a foundation for greater respect among people of differing cultures and faiths. Pope Francis was a dedicated leader and was committed to serving the most vulnerable and defending religious freedom. He broke ground as the first pope from the Americas and the southern hemisphere. Pope Francis inspired people across the globe by reminding them that the Church is like a field hospital for the broken and wounded. He will also be remembered for his travels around the globe, sharing messages of truth, peace and unity. Pope Francis urged countries to pursue dialogue, reconciliation and genuine peace. His heartfelt appeals, delivered even in this very Chamber, echoed the United Nations founding promise that diplomacy must prevail and that the scourge of war must be overcome. We stand united in the belief that freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief are twin pillars of liberty. The people of the United States continue to mourn and pray for Pope Francis. God rest his soul.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Caccia (Holy See): My delegation is grateful to you, Mr. President, for having convened this extraordinary plenary meeting of the General Assembly to pay tribute to the memory of His Holiness Pope Francis. I wish to express deep gratitude to the Secretary-General for having travelled to the Vatican to represent the United Nations at Pope Francis's funeral last Saturday. I thank all participants for their presence today, notwithstanding the busy agenda, as we take pause to honour Pope Francis and reflect on his legacy. A warm greeting to all here present, and those who are following remotely, wishing to honour Pope Francis. I would also like to acknowledge the respect shown to the memory of Pope Francis by the lowering of the United Nations flag at all United Nations duty posts today. This honour has been echoed across the globe by the flags flying at half-mast in many Member State capitals. I thank them. Let me thank all the speakers who have delivered statements this afternoon. They have offered us a wonderful panorama of how Pope Francis's pontificate affected all regions of the world.

Pope Francis recognized the fundamental importance of multilateralism, with the United Nations at its centre, as the pledge of a secure and happy future for generations yet to come. While not afraid to highlight the need for reform and adaptation, he was clear that the United Nations remains necessary. His words and actions bore witness to this, and I would like to share images from three particular moments.

The first image takes us back almost 10 years, to 25 September 2015, when Pope Francis, from this very rostrum, addressed a packed General Assembly (see A/70/PV.3). His presence was a clear sign of his appreciation for this Organization, especially at that moment, when the programme of work for the next 15 years was adopted. Describing the plan as an important sign of hope, Pope Francis encouraged

world leaders to ensure that all could have the minimum spiritual and material means needed to live in dignity. He further called on them to consider the foundation of integral human development, namely the right to life and, more generally, what we could call the right to existence of human nature itself.

The second image comes from the eve of 2020, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, when Pope Francis welcomed Mr. António Guterres, the Secretary-General, to the Vatican. In an unprecedented way, they delivered a statement together, warning the world that we must not avert our eyes from forms of injustice and inequality, the scandal of world hunger, poverty and children who die because they lack water, food and necessary care. They recalled the plight of all the displaced and those who leave their countries in search of a better life and yet, all too often, meet with a tragic fate. Unabashedly, they also declared that the arms race and nuclear rearmament were crying out to God. As an antidote, they underscored the importance of trust in dialogue between individuals and between nations, in multilateralism for the building of a peaceful world.

The third image is that of the *Statio Orbis*, the prayer for the whole world, which Pope Francis led on 27 March 2020, during the coronavirus disease pandemic. As members may recall, in a dark and deserted Saint Peter's Square, the Pope's purpose was to bring before the face of God the pain and anguish of all humanity, praying for divine assistance and bearing witness to the hope that together we might overcome that tragic moment. At that instant, the whole world understood that we are inexorably connected and interdependent. The coronavirus disease affected rich and poor, developing and developed nations. We all felt equally helpless and yet dependent on each other. We understood that global challenges require equally global responses. Yet, from the very beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis also warned us that there is yet another uncontained pandemic, a moral one, which he defined as the globalization of indifference. It anaesthetizes us and, paradoxically, at the very moment when someone needs our help, we distance ourselves from them.

Pope Francis showed another way of behaving, one which he outlined in 2019, together with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, when he signed the document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together. The insights he expressed in that document were crystallized in the encyclical entitled *Fratelli tutti*, on fraternity and social friendship, at the heart of which he placed the well-known parable of the Good Samaritan, who takes care of the one injured and abandoned on the roadside.

As Pope Francis keenly observed, there are no alternatives but to trust in the best of the human spirit, to persevere in love, to restore dignity to the suffering and to build a society worthy of the name. In this spirit, he chose as the motto for the Jubilee Year 2025 of the Catholic Church, which coincides with the eightieth anniversary of the United Nations Organization, "Pilgrims of hope". The best way we can commemorate Pope Francis today is to take that torch of hope and rediscover the spirit which, 80 years ago, created this Organization, so that together we can all work to hand on a better world to the generations that will come after us.

The President: I would like to inform the Assembly that I have received requests from additional Member States to speak in this commemorative meeting.

Mr. Oddone (Argentina) (spoke in Spanish): These are tragic times for Argentina, which has lost both a son and a father. We therefore wish to express our gratitude for the events organized by other States to date.

Pope Francis was a spiritual leader, and humankind is mourning him. He was also a beacon who illuminated human dignity, of which he was such a staunch defender, in particular the human dignity that shone in those most forgotten: the unborn children owing to the scourge of abortion; older people, who are so often devalued, especially when euthanasia is offered as an option; women who suffer

trafficking and exploitation; children put up for sale as a result of surrogacy; those who are denied their freedom of thought and religion, which are rights threatened for so many victims of religiously motivated attacks around the world.

He was a tireless defender of the importance of the family. He maintained that the family was the first place in which we learned the value of the other, etching on our hearts the principle of equality in human dignity for all, without distinction on the basis of age, circumstances or status. The protection of the family is a cherished principle of international law, but it is not often always duly recorded in our documents.

As we recall, he chose to visit the United Nations among his first trips, in 2015. Here he left us a highly topical legacy, urging us to put to an end

“as quickly as possible... the phenomenon of social and economic exclusion, with its baneful consequences of human trafficking, the marketing of human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of boys and girls, slave labour, including prostitution, the drug and weapons trade, terrorism and international organized crime.” (A/70/PV.3, p. 4)

He warned us about the risk of falling into a declarationist nominalism with a soothing effect on consciences. The best tribute we can pay to him is to be the guardians of his message, which calls on us to stir from our torpor, to appeal for human dignity, which is at times shrouded by unbridled ambition and collective selfishness, as he stated, or by other ways of denying the central importance of human beings.

With respect to international conflict, he always sought pathways to peace and dialogue to overcome painful situations facing humankind. We particularly remember his warning on dictatorships, when, in responding to a question, he stated that the message he would give to governing officials is to enter into dialogue and to make peace. Dictatorships do nothing to serve us and they end badly, sooner or later.

In each of these assertions made by His Holiness, Pope Francis is anchored in the heart of the founding human rights treaties that guide our work in this Organization. The Argentine Republic wants to work together to ensure that this legacy that we have sought to reflect here becomes a reality. We thank all present for this opportunity to affectionately remember and honour the memory of our dear Pope Francis, who was the pilgrim of so much human suffering, and may he rest in peace.

Mr. Greco (Italy): The passing of His Holiness Pope Francis leaves the whole international community, and Italy in particular, with deep sorrow and a sense of emptiness. However, because of his leadership and dedication, Pope Francis also leaves us with a sense of hope for the future. Remembering him in the General Assembly has special meaning, due to Pope Francis’s relentless commitment to peace and a more just world, with a special focus on the peripheries of the world, on the poor and on the most vulnerable. With his hopes stronger than any hardship, Pope Francis invited the world, and therefore all of us, to a change of course and to embark on a path that “does not crush, but cultivates, repairs and protects”.

His example compels us all to walk in this direction, to seek the path of peace, pursue the common good, protect our planet and build a more just, equitable and truly human society. We cannot limit ourselves to remembrance and gratitude. The lessons of Pope Francis must translate into a sense of responsibility and into making the insights of his teachings our own.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The passing of His Holiness Pope Francis is not just an irreplaceable loss for the Roman Catholics, but also a very heavy loss for the entire international community. We in Russia will long remember the late pontiff as a remarkable religious man and statesman, well known for his long-standing work for peace and justice, who advocated for the strengthening of spiritual and moral basic values in world politics.

He was a person of deep and abiding faith. All his life, he served the humanist ideas of humankind and always showed compassion and humanity towards those who were most vulnerable and disadvantaged, while remaining the spiritual mainstay for millions of people around the world. During the 12 years of his pontificate, Pope Francis worked tirelessly. He made apostolic visits into the most remote parts of the world. He met millions of faithful and consistently advocated for the peaceful settlement of conflicts and just solutions to the issues of migration and poverty, to draw attention to contemporary modern challenges.

Pope Francis came from Latin America, and therefore, as no one else, he understood the importance of building a more just multipolar world and building international relations on the basis of mutual respect and equality. We in Russia highly value the personal contribution the Pope made in the development of a constructive interaction between our country and the Holy See and his peacekeeping efforts and support in resolving a number of humanitarian issues in the context of the Ukrainian crisis. What is worthy of particular support is the fact that the Pope genuinely tried to understand the root causes of the current conflict and on many occasions called for negotiations, while always showing that he was ready to assist in a peaceful settlement. Another thing that was developed during the pontificate was the relations between the Russian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church. In Havana in 2016, the first meeting between the All Russia Patriarch Kirill and the Head of the Roman Catholic Church took place, and it was a new phase in developing the inter-church dialogue. We highly value the statement made by the pontiff in support of religious liberty and particularly the persecuted Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and we hope that the spiritual legacy of the Pope will be built upon by those who will come after him and those who share his work and his desire to improve peace, security and stability. We convey our deep and heartfelt condolences to the Holy See, to the Catholic clergy and to the faithful. May his soul rest in peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cameroon, who will speak on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the member States belonging to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in my capacity as Chair of the group.

Let me express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting in the aftermath of the unfortunate transition to the great beyond of His Holiness Pope Francis, on 21 April 2025.

We join the Catholic Church and the international community at large in mourning the passing of a distinguished world leader, whose contributions to the cause of the oppressed and the vulnerable segments of the human population received wide acclaim. While we received this unfortunate news with heavy hearts, we offer our sincere condolences to the entire family of the departed Pope, the Catholic Church and the entirety of humankind. Indeed, the OIC community has lost a close ally, whose position was unwavering in the defence of the noble causes of human dignity, tolerance and dialogue. We recall with pride the late pontiff's courageous stance for the cause of peace and interreligious harmony, including his principled positions on humanitarian issues and conflict resolution.

Without a doubt, Pope Francis departed this world at a time when the entirety of humankind had begun to savour his exceptional and sterling contributions to the resolution of the various sociopolitical crises in many regions of the world. During his last moments, his clarion call for an end to the carnage and human suffering in Gaza and elsewhere in the occupied Palestinian territory was a demonstration of his cherished principles of the defence and promotion of human rights worldwide.

As we seek consolation in the lofty ideals of peacebuilding, which the departed Pope stood for during his lifetime, we will continue to remember his indefatigable role in promoting peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims, foremost of which is the protection of the holy sites of Muslims and Christians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

We shall also seek consolation in the great legacy that Pope Francis left behind through the document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, which he executed with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed El-Tayeb, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, on 4 February 2019. That document will remain a road map for the positive relationship between Islam and Christianity and a symbol of interreligious tolerance and dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

On this solemn occasion, we pray to the almighty, the omnipotent and the most merciful to grant the soul of the departed Pope Francis eternal repose and to bestow on his immediate family, the Catholic Church and humanity at large the fortitude to bear his irreparable loss.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Palau, who will speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

Ms. Seid (Palau): It is with deep sorrow and profound respect that I stand before the Assembly today, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, to pay tribute to a man who transcended the pulpit, the palace and the walls that so often divide us: His Holiness Pope Francis. His Holiness Pope Francis epitomized what the United Nations stands for, including peace, humanitarian care and compassion, and environmental stewardship.

We thank you, Mr. President, for convening us.

Pope Francis was more than a spiritual leader. He was a voice for the voiceless, a fearless advocate for justice and a model of humility, love and compassion. His Holiness reminded us that the Lord's most powerful message is one of mercy, and that inclusion, compassion and justice must be the foundation of our shared humanity. He spoke not only for those in the pews, but for the poor, the vulnerable and the displaced, and for all those on the front lines of injustice, inequality and climate change. He saw and gave voice to the struggles of those suffering, which are too often rendered invisible. His papal visits to small island developing States during his papacy, including in September 2024 to Papua New Guinea, Singapore and Timor-Leste, reflected his commitment to the most vulnerable and those on the periphery. His message was clear: no one is disposable, every life is sacred, and true strength lies not in dominion but in service to others.

In his powerful encyclical *Laudato si'*, His Holiness called the world to urgent action to recognize the profound moral obligation that we share to protect our common home. He wrote that the climate is a common good, which belongs to all and is meant for all. He stood with those of us whose very way of life is threatened by rising seas and a warming planet, calling us to see creation not as a possession to be exploited but as a sacred gift entrusted to our care. His commitment through the Holy See to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 was a powerful example of leadership, showing that caring for our common home is a responsibility shared by all.

Pope Francis embodied true leadership, not through wealth or power, but through simplicity, humility and a life of service to others. He consistently rejected the trappings of materialism, choosing instead to live the gospel through his daily actions. His example challenges us to focus on what truly matters: compassion, humility and the inherent dignity of every person. He spoke with courage, loved without condition and committed himself to dialogue over division, to the building of bridges instead of walls and to encounters over exclusion. His legacy endures as a

testament to the transformative power of small acts of mercy, showing us that a life dedicated to service can move the conscience of humanity and illuminate the world. At its best, faith is not a fortress behind which to retreat, but a light that guides us forward, inspiring us to remember that we are bound together across oceans, borders, cultures and creeds by our shared humanity. Pope Francis's work for peace, justice and solidarity reminds us that those values must be pursued constantly and with courage, wherever we are and with all of our hearts.

Today we mourn the loss of a great leader. We also celebrate a legacy that will forever guide us, a legacy of mercy, courage and an unshakeable commitment to human dignity. On behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, we offer our deepest condolences to the family of His Holiness, to the Holy See, to the people of Argentina, to the Catholic community and to all who mourn his passing. May His Holiness Pope Francis rest in eternal peace, and may his vision of a more just, compassionate and inclusive world continue to guide our collective journey.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in this commemorative meeting.

Mr. Bríz Gutiérrez (Guatemala), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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.76)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uzbekistan to introduce draft resolution A/79/L.76.

Mr. Lapasov (Uzbekistan): It is an honour for me today to present, on behalf of Uzbekistan, Chile and the Philippines a draft resolution proclaiming 29 April, the proposed date of its adoption, as the International Day in Memory of the Victims of Earthquakes.

The President of Uzbekistan, His Excellency Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has on multiple occasions at international forums proposed the establishment of such an International Day. Earthquakes remain one of the deadliest natural hazards, with the catastrophic potential to claim lives, devastate communities and disrupt development gains. They are deeply human tragedies, which strike without warning, often in the most vulnerable corners of our world, causing immense human suffering, destruction and loss. Though they account for a relatively small percentage of natural disasters in terms of numbers, they are among the deadliest.

We express our heartfelt appreciation to all the Member States that participated in the informal consultations and contributed to the drafting process. We also extend sincere thanks to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for its invaluable support and cooperation.

This draft resolution emerged from a shared experience and a common concern. Over the past century and, indeed throughout history, earthquakes have ravaged cities and communities in every corner of the globe, including my own country. Yet from the ruins rose unity, reconstruction and resilience. It is in that spirit that we propose this resolution. The draft resolution highlights the urgent need to increase awareness, reduce vulnerability, protect lives and livelihoods and advance risk-informed planning. It has three primary goals.

The first is to commemorate the victims of earthquakes worldwide. We believe that the designation of this International Day would provide a meaningful opportunity

to honour the memory of those who lost their lives, to stand with survivors and to recognize the front-line responders and humanitarian workers who risk their lives in the aftermath of disaster.

The second is to raise global awareness about the risks of earthquakes and their consequences. That includes promoting the integration of earthquake-related knowledge into educational systems, early-warning strategies, urban planning and public awareness campaigns.

The third is to foster a global culture of preparedness, resilience and risk reduction. We must encourage investment and policies that reduce exposure to seismic risk, strengthen infrastructure and ensure that recovery is inclusive and sustainable. That includes psychosocial support for affected communities, support for displacement-affected populations and measures to build back better.

Importantly, it should be emphasized that the adoption of the draft resolution would not only be an act of commemoration but a call to action on the risks posed by earthquakes. It symbolizes our collective recognition and shared responsibility. In both letter and spirit, the resolution leaves no one behind. It respects national capacities and relies entirely on voluntary contributions for its observance. It also invites the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to facilitate the observance of the International Day. We encourage all Member States to consider making voluntary contributions and urge earthquake-prone countries to organize meaningful national activities in observance of the Day. A robust commemoration would serve not only as a tribute to victims but also as a catalyst for advancing disaster prevention and preparedness.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the past cannot be undone, but the future can be better prepared. May this International Day become a lasting reminder of what we have lost and what we must protect. May it be a call to all Governments, institutions, civil society and individuals to work hand in hand to prevent, prepare, and protect. Let us unite — in remembrance, in solidarity and in shared responsibility — to ensure that the memory of the victims guides our resolve to build a more resilient world.

We sincerely hope that the resolution will be adopted by consensus and we call on all those who have not yet done so to sponsor this document, which serves a truly noble goal.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/79/L.76.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/79/L.76: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, France, the Gambia, Gabon, Germany, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritania, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, the State of Palestine, Suriname, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/79/L.76, entitled “International Day in Memory of the Victims of Earthquakes”.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/79/L.76?

Draft resolution A/79/L.76 was adopted (resolution 79/285).

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

Mr. López Ferrucci (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentine Republic is grateful for the work done by the delegations of Uzbekistan, Chile and Philippines in their role as facilitators of the resolution (resolution 79/285).

Argentina recalls that we disassociate ourselves from the Pact for the Future (resolution 79/1) and consider that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, although well intentioned, comprises non-legally binding ambitions that each State, in exercise of its sovereignty, has the right to interpret and pursue freely. As such, my country disassociates itself from all of those paragraphs that refer to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals as well as references to the Pact for the Future. That reservation also extends to all of those paragraphs which run counter to the guiding principles of the protection of life, freedom and private property.

Mr. Heartney (United States of America): The United States thanks Chile, the Philippines and Uzbekistan for facilitating negotiations on this resolution (resolution 79/285), which highlights the wide-ranging and long-lasting impacts of earthquakes on communities around the world.

This resolution comes a month after the devastating earthquake in central Myanmar on 28 March. The significant loss of life, injuries and widespread destruction are deeply concerning. As President Trump has made clear, the impacts of the earthquake in Myanmar are catastrophic and tragic and we are committed to helping those affected. The United States extends our deepest sympathies and condolences to the peoples of Myanmar and Thailand and to the victims of all earthquakes and their families.

The road to recovery in the wake of those disasters is long and challenging but we have seen before, when there is collective commitment to respond, communities can come together to rebuild and emerge stronger in the face of tragedy.

At the same time, we regret the endorsement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development included in this resolution. The United States rejects and denounces the 2030 Agenda and will no longer reaffirm the Sustainable Development Goals as a matter of course. As such, the United States disassociates itself from preambular paragraphs 1 and 16.

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.78.

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take action on a draft decision, A/79/L.78, entitled “Accreditation and participation of intergovernmental organizations in the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development”.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/79/L.78?

Draft decision A/79/L.78 was adopted (decision 79/560).

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

Agenda item 4 (continued)

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

The Acting President: I now invite the attention of the General Assembly to draft resolution A/79/L.79 and a draft amendment contained in document A/79/L.80, circulated under agenda item 107, entitled “Crime prevention and criminal justice”.

Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 107 at its 55th plenary meeting, on 24 December 2024. In order for the Assembly to take action on the draft resolution it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 107.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to reopen consideration of agenda item 107?

It was so decided (decision 79/505 B).

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 13 September 2024, the Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 107 to the Third Committee. To enable the Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 107 directly, in plenary meeting, and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 107 (continued)

Draft resolution (A/79/L.79)

Draft amendment (A/79/L.80)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft amendment A/79/L.80.

Ms. Zabolotskaya (Russian Federation) (spoke in Russian): We welcome draft resolution A/79/L.79, introduced by President of the General Assembly, entitled “Modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons”. The Russian Federation supports the Global Plan of Action and regards the high-level meeting as one of the most important platforms for fostering international cooperation to combat such a heinous and inhumane phenomenon as human trafficking. We extend our gratitude to the coordinators of the negotiations, namely to the delegations of Cyprus and Tajikistan, for endeavouring to take on board the opinions of all parties in a balanced manner.

At the same time, we note with regret that, for a number of delegations, the priority at such meetings continues to be a politicization of the discussion through biased civil society representatives, rather than a substantive exchange of views. The practice of submitting the list of participants from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to a vote in the General Assembly has long since proven ineffectual. In essence, it serves to circumvent the well-established criteria and the consensus-based rules of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations — a key United Nations body for our engagement with civil society. Moreover, upon submission of the list to the General Assembly, the task of weeding out unconstructive and politicized NGOs

becomes impossible. Western countries and their allies are attempting to secure the approval of an unapproved list through voting, and the meeting itself is turning into a platform for settling political scores. We cannot countenance such a state of affairs.

In that connection, Russia is introducing A/79/L.80, an amendment to the draft resolution. It seeks to reinstate the much fairer and tried-and-tested, non-State based and United Nations-based procedure, whereby there is a non-objection basis for the NGO list without requiring its subsequent approval by the General Assembly. That text has been used on many occasions, in various resolutions and at various meetings, and we trust that all delegations will support our amendment.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/79/L.79 and draft amendment A/79/L.80.

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

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft amendment and, in addition to the delegations listed in the document, Belarus has also become a co-sponsor of draft amendment A/79/L.80.

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 for explanations 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. Oehri (Liechtenstein): We would like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Cyprus and Tajikistan and their teams for their outstanding work on draft resolution A/79/L.79, entitled “Modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons”.

The draft resolution before us today allows for the equitable participation of civil society organizations by ensuring that the final decision on their participation is taken by the General Assembly. Civil society actors and other stakeholders are essential for combating human trafficking and modern slavery globally, including through awareness-raising, training, research and the provision of critical legal and psychosocial support to the survivors of those heinous crimes. The expertise of a different range of actors will not only enrich the discussions during the high-level meeting but will also ensure that the outcome will have an impact at the local level.

We regret the submission of draft amendment A/79/L.80, which seeks to undermine the established standards for civil society participation. For the third time this year already, a small number of Member States is seeking to insist on the non-objection basis in an attempt to retain a veto over which organizations can or cannot participate. The proposed amendment not only calls into question language that has been adopted in 16 modality resolutions over the past years, but also erodes the transparency foreseen for the inclusion of civil society organizations.

We strongly believe that the meaningful participation of non-governmental organizations will make the high-level meeting more effective and substantial. To ensure that their voices are heard, we call upon Member States to vote against the draft amendment.

Ms. Zabolotskaya (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I did not request the floor, but since I was given it, let me just underscore one point: the wording that

we are proposing is the wording that was adopted by consensus on far more than 16 occasions. In our view, consensus is of the utmost importance.

Ms. Holzer Fleming (United Kingdom): On behalf of the United Kingdom, we would like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Tajikistan and Cyprus and their teams for their diligent work on draft resolution A/79/L.79, entitled “Modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons” and their stewardship of the process.

We support the high-level meeting and are committed to efforts towards combating modern slavery and human trafficking. We were glad to see that language on civil society participation was included in the draft, which allows for meaningful participation in that important high-level meeting. Those modalities allow us to see the rationale for objections to non-governmental organization (NGO) participation. That transparency is essential to ensuring that the Conference will include voices from a range of experts in this topic, including NGOs, civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector, 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 are concerned that, despite strong precedents, that language is once again being brought into question. This is the third time this year that we are having to vote on long-established language that was agreed by consensus as recently as 2024 and that is present in 16 modality resolutions to date. We regret that a small number of Member States continue to use the non-objection basis to attempt to block organizations from other countries on vague or politicized bases without even providing rationale, amounting to a veto to stakeholder participation.

We believe it is necessary that organizations doing crucial work on combating trafficking be granted participation in that high-level meeting. They play an invaluable role in eradicating modern slavery and human trafficking globally and supporting survivors. Their contributions help to improve our decision-making and enrich our evidence base, making United Nations action more effective and more substantial.

It would be a disservice not to take advantage of all the tools we have. That includes partnerships with civil society.

Mr. Reza Bautista (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico wishes to express its position on the amendment contained in document A/79/L.80 in relation to the draft resolution on the modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Mexico will vote against the amendment because of the substantive benefits that the broad participation of a range of non-governmental organizations, as well as other actors, brings to the United Nations system and to the legitimacy of our multilateral processes. Their participation enriches our debates with specialized knowledge and with direct experience of the realities on the ground, allowing us to develop more effective and comprehensive responses.

Any attempt to restrict that openness would constitute a backwards step in our collective commitment to a more representative and effective multilateralism. As such, for Mexico it is essential that the criteria for selection and participation actively promote gender parity and equitable geographical representation.

We are grateful, therefore, to Cyprus and Tajikistan for their work facilitating this text and their efforts to reflect the balance that protects those fundamental principles. The General Assembly must preserve its primordial role in determining the participation of representatives from non-governmental bodies in this high-level meeting and in other similar processes.

Mexico reaffirms its tireless commitment to the meaningful participation of those actors, in accordance with the norms and practices established in the United Nations and the General Assembly. We appeal to members to support these efforts and to strengthen the scope, impact and substance of the discussions that we will hold as part of this high-level meeting.

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 resolution A/79/L.79, in accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the Assembly shall first take a decision on draft amendment A/79/L.80.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ethiopia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Türkiye, Vanuatu, Viet Nam

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

Draft amendment A/79/L.80 was rejected by 79 to 16, with 37 abstentions.

The Acting President: Since draft amendment A/79/L.80 was not adopted, we shall proceed to take action on draft resolution A/79/L.79.

A separate recorded vote has been requested on operative paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/79/L.79.

I shall now put to the vote operative paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/79/L.79.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Vanuatu

Against:

Belarus, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Türkiye, United States of America

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bahrain, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Togo, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen

Operative paragraph 9 of draft resolution A/79/L.79 was retained by 89 votes to 9, with 29 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of India and Mongolia informed the Secretariat that they had intended to abstain; the delegation of Mongolia informed the Secretariat that it had intended not to participate.]

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/79/L.79, entitled "Modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/79/L.79?

Draft resolution A/79/L.79 was adopted (resolution 79/286).

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

Mr. Tur de la Concepción (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba is convinced of the usefulness of the participation of civil society in the work of the United Nations.

For decades we have witnessed how thousands of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including many from the South and Cuba, have provided a significant contribution to the work of the United Nations, in accordance with established procedures and practices, including consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and the non-objection procedure.

Those principles, which for decades have characterized the participation in the United Nations of civil society organizations that do not have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, should be preserved. My delegation does not support attempts to erode those principles.

It is imperative that the issue of NGO participation not lead to the politicization of, or divisions in, the work of the United Nations. We invite interested non-governmental organizations to apply for consultative status before the Economic and Social Council in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1996/31 and to continue providing their invaluable input into the work of the United Nations in line with established modalities and practices.

Mr. Heartney (United States of America): The United States welcomes the adoption of resolution 79/286. We commend the leadership for their facilitation of the text.

The United States is firmly committed to combating human trafficking, which tears apart communities, fuels criminal activity and threatens the national security of the United States and other countries. The international community must work together to confront that threat, support victims and survivors and hold traffickers accountable for their heinous crimes. Combating trafficking in persons makes our country and the world safer, stronger and more prosperous — a sentiment echoed in the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which shows that trafficking in persons “has negative effects on development, peace and security and human rights”. The United States supports the framework of the Plan of Action, which is aimed at preventing trafficking in persons, protecting victims and survivors, prosecuting traffickers and strengthening anti-trafficking partnerships — a framework reflected in our Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

A concern that we have about this resolution is its affirmation, in the fifth preambular paragraph, 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.

Lastly, the United States disassociates itself from operative paragraph 9 of the text, owing to the language on gender parity. The United States strongly supports the protection of women and girls, the defence of their rights and their empowerment. However, the United States opposes the use of quotas to achieve parity for women and girls. We regret that clearer language on the meaningful participation of women and men in high-level conferences was not incorporated into the text.

Mr. Escobar (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina supported the consensus on resolution 79/286, entitled “Modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons”, and wishes to explain its position.

With regard to the reference to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the fifth preambular paragraph, Argentina reaffirms its commitment to the protection of the individual rights of all human beings, without distinction, in accordance with the obligations expressly agreed in the international treaties to which it is party. Furthermore, it recalls that the 2030 Agenda, to which it committed itself in good faith, consists of non-legally binding aspirations that each State, in exercising its sovereignty, is entitled to interpret and pursue freely. As to the reference to the Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1) in the sixth preambular paragraph, Argentina recalls that it dissociated itself from the Pact during the Summit of the Future in September 2024.

With regard to the reference to gender parity in operative paragraph 9, the Argentine Republic is committed to genuine equality of opportunity for women, in accordance with the duties it assumed in the international treaties to which it is party and in accordance with its own national Constitution, which explicitly recognizes that equality, associating it with measures entailing positive action. However, gender

parity was just one such possible measure, and Argentina did not see it as necessarily affording the structural changes required to achieve genuine equality of opportunity for women because, among other reasons, it does not prioritize their value and contribution to social life, but instead promotes a superficial and artificial solution, which, far from combating structural discrimination, perpetuates stereotypes and symbolic discrimination against women.

Mr. Tanriöven (Türkiye): Türkiye is 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, as it is essential for achieving our common goals. A large number of NGOs and other stakeholders from Türkiye have been contributing to all spheres of work of the United Nations and working together with the United Nations all over the globe, in particular in the most vulnerable countries.

We strongly support the participation of NGOs and other stakeholders 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. Türkiye supports those NGOs and other stakeholders whose activities will contribute to the high-level meeting on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Yet we cannot underestimate the fact that some NGOs might engage 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.

As a long-standing member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, we have encountered numerous cases in which Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) consultative status and participation in various United Nations meetings were abused by certain organizations. That led to the unnecessary politicization of those discussions, which made it difficult to achieve constructive dialogue and consensus. We believe that the criteria and principles formulated in ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 should apply to all NGOs seeking to participate in the conferences and meetings of the United Nations.

Not all Member States have detailed information on the objectives, activities and financing of those NGOs to which certain Member States object. We believe that the participation of NGOs in the United Nations process should be handled in good faith among the Member States that may have full information about the activities of the NGOs in question. As a matter of fact, for the purposes of transparency and informed decision-making, it is highly important for Member States to know in detail how those NGOs and stakeholders plan to contribute to the high-level meeting.

It was in that context that Türkiye suggested removing the final line from operative paragraph 9 of resolution 79/286 during informal consultations and voted in favour of draft amendment A/79/L.80, presented today. As the draft amendment was not adopted today, Türkiye disassociates itself from operative paragraph 9 of the resolution.

Mr. Pilipenko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Trafficking in persons remains one of the most dangerous global challenges of our time, and Belarus attaches great importance to preventing and combating that criminal practice in all its forms and manifestations, both in the context of international cooperation and at a national level.

The United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons is the cornerstone of international efforts to protect human rights and eradicate one of the most egregious and heinous forms of criminal activity. The importance of the Global Plan lies not only in creating a single platform for coordinating the actions of States, international organizations and civil society, but also in setting clear guidelines for preventing crime, protecting victims and ensuring the accountability of perpetrators.

Regular reviews of the Plan of Action are of critical importance, as they allow us to assess the effectiveness of the measures being implemented, identify new challenges and adapt the strategy to changing realities. Without such a living, updated mechanism, it is impossible to achieve lasting results in the fight against this grave crime, which undermines the freedom and dignity of millions of people worldwide.

Accordingly, the Republic of Belarus supports the adoption of this important resolution (resolution 79/286) without a vote. We are grateful to the coordinators of the process — the Permanent Representatives of Cyprus and Tajikistan — for their work, their openness to constructive dialogue and for the time they allowed for a comprehensive and integrated discussion of all aspects of the text. We are also grateful to the representatives of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for the advice that they provided in support of the process.

As for the text of the resolution itself, we would like to point out the importance and relevance of the topics selected for the two interactive panel discussions to be held during the high-level meeting. We also welcome the focus on attracting the widest possible range of participants for those segments of the event, in particular victims of human trafficking. Belarus, in its national capacity and also as coordinator of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, will help to ensure that those activities are successful.

In conclusion, concerning operative paragraph 9, we would like to say that the position of Belarus on the issue of how to select non-governmental organizations for participation in this meeting and other similar activities remains unchanged. In that regard, Belarus supported the relevant amendment, and, as in the past, we disassociate ourselves from its content.

Ms. Zabolotskaya (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to make the following interpretive statement. As regards the words gender parity in paragraph 9, we reaffirm our position that it is ineffective to create artificial quotas in order to broaden the participation of individual groups and, in that regard, we consider the words gender parity to only mean that the conditions are established for the participation of women on equal terms with men in the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

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

I wish to express my sincere thanks to His Excellency Mr. Jonibek Ismoil Hikmat, Permanent Representative of Tajikistan, and Her Excellency Ms. Maria Michail, Permanent Representative of Cyprus, who ably and patiently conducted the discussions and complex negotiations in the informal consultations on this resolution. I am sure members of the General Assembly join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 107.

Agenda item 127 (*continued*)

Global health and foreign policy

Draft resolution (A/79/L.74)

The Acting President: Before we proceed to take action on draft resolution A/79/L.74, I should like to inform members that the Assembly will hold a debate on this item at a later date to be announced.

I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand to introduce draft resolution A/79/L.74.

Mr. Chaivaivid (Thailand): On behalf of the seven members of the Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative, namely Brazil, France, Indonesia, Norway, Senegal, South Africa and Thailand, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/79/L.74, entitled “Global health and foreign policy: rethinking health promotion as a transformative path towards improved and more sustainable well-being for all”.

The Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative was formed by the Foreign Ministers of those seven countries in September 2006. The group foresaw the growing synergies between foreign policy and global health. They saw the need to tackle emerging challenges and health emergencies collectively, in order to enhance partnership, international cooperation and solidarity at all levels. Since 2008, the group has introduced in the General Assembly draft resolutions to bring global health issues to the greater attention of the international community.

The global health landscape today is interlocked with unprecedented challenges. The rising burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) is responsible for 24 per cent of global deaths. Non-medical factors, such as the adverse effects of climate change, conflicts and geopolitical tensions, further aggravate health outcomes.

Despite all the challenges, health financing is on the decline, facing sharp cuts in external aid and global health funding. Some 2 billion people face financial hardship owing to medical bills. For us to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 3 and health-related Goals, the status quo is clearly not an option. We need to rethink how to better prepare our health system and how to make smarter investments in health.

This draft resolution gives us an opportunity to create a paradigm shift on how to address multiple global health challenges and health inequities, with a focus on health promotion to achieve good health and well-being. Allow me to highlight the main elements of the draft resolution.

First, the draft resolution stresses that priority must be given to health promotion and disease prevention. That includes the promotion of healthy lifestyles for all, to enhance health equity and improve the population’s health throughout the life course. It also urges that we pay greater attention to those who are often forgotten, such as elderly persons, persons with disabilities and persons living with mental health issues, as well as newborns, women, children and youth.

Secondly, the draft resolution underscores the need to comprehensively address the determinants of health which are the root causes of ill health in key policies across sectors. It emphasizes the need to apply health-in-all policy approaches and a one-health approach, while recognizing the need to tackle unhealthy products as major risk factors for NCDs through various measures, including consumer protection, especially for youth and children.

Thirdly, the draft resolution also underlines the transformative potential of digital technologies in advancing health promotion and disease prevention, while recognizing the need to bridge the digital divide in health among and within countries. It also places an emphasis on access, especially to digital technology for developing countries, to ensure equitable access to medical countermeasures and technologies, as well as access to quality and affordable health services for all, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services.

Fourthly, the draft resolution highlights the importance of building healthcare system capacities and the capacities of the healthcare workforce, particularly for developing countries. The launch and the role of the World Health Organization (WHO) Academy is also highlighted as an important element in this process to support Member States in enhancing lifelong learning capacities for the health workforce.

Fifthly, the draft resolution calls for strengthening multisectoral actions, increasing financing, investment and consideration for sustainable financing mechanisms for health promotion. Cost-effective public health interventions will reduce burdens on the health system and public health spending in the long run.

This draft resolution is the result of the collective efforts of a great many delegations that took an active and constructive part in the negotiations. I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude for their commitment and flexibility. We also extend our appreciation to WHO for the expertise provided throughout the negotiation process. We believe that what we have before us is a balanced text that represents the best compromises, given constraints and differences. We therefore call on all Member States to sustain that positive momentum by fully supporting the adoption of this draft resolution by consensus. Full support for its adoption means supporting the global health system to better prepare for, and respond to, future global health challenges, towards improved and more sustainable well-being for all.

Before I conclude, let me welcome the conclusion of the negotiation of the WHO Pandemic Agreement earlier this month, in view of its consideration by the World Health Assembly at its seventy-eighth session. That agreement is of course testament to the fact that we can overcome differences and constraints by working together and that multilateralism can work to save lives.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/79/L.74.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/79/L.74, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Colombia, El Salvador, the Gambia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Viet Nam.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/79/L.74.

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): The United States calls for a vote on this draft resolution (A/79/L.74), owing to several provisions that are counter to United States policies. We greatly appreciate the efforts by Thailand and the other co-facilitators to further integrate health promotion into foreign policy towards improved global health. The text, however, is overly broad and touches on multiple policy areas beyond the scope of the draft resolution, such as intellectual property, financing and climate change. United Nations agencies must respect the mandates of other processes and institutions.

While the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (WTO) share some common interests, they have different roles, rules and memberships. The United Nations is not the appropriate venue for discussions about the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). The flexibilities provided for in the TRIPS Agreement are for use at the discretion of WTO members as they best see fit. It is inappropriate for the United Nations to mandate or influence when or how WTO members act. Selectively calling out and characterizing the TRIPS Agreement suggests that the United Nations is attempting to influence issues within the independent mandate of the WTO. In addition, the United States requires all

references to technology transfer to include the modifiers “voluntary” and “on mutually agreed terms”. Any sharing of proprietary information, expertise or technology needs to be both voluntary and on mutually agreed terms. We firmly underscore the importance of regulatory and legal environments that support innovation.

References to global health financing are also problematic. The United States does not support calls for additional financing or the proliferation of new financing mechanisms. Member States should instead focus on domestic resource mobilization.

The United States cannot support the unnecessary and distracting focus on climate in this body’s work. In lieu of general references to climate change as a policy matter or a root cause of threats, the United States encourages Member States to focus on specific environmental threats, such as threats to clean water and clean air, wildfires, floods, droughts and sea level rise, or on sensible environmental protections, such as increasing access to affordable, reliable and secure energy and enhancing resilience and disaster planning.

The text also includes references that do not appropriately focus on the needs and perspectives of women and girls, including “gender-sensitive”. It is the policy of the United States is to use clear and accurate language that recognizes that women are biologically female and men are biologically male. It is important to acknowledge the biological reality of sex to support the needs and perspectives of women and girls. The United States will not accept references to sexual and reproductive health services or derivatives of that term, especially when such references are not caveated to respect national policies and priorities. There is no international right to abortion.

The text also includes references to “health equity”. That term lacks definitional consensus. The United States objects to the inclusion of that term. More broadly, the draft resolution references several non-binding documents, many of which do not add value to the draft resolution and are more appropriately “noted”, rather than “affirmed” or “welcomed”. To that point, the United States has been clear that it no longer affirms the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or the Sustainable Development Goals as a matter of course. They advance an unacceptable programme of soft global governance and undercut the sovereignty of States and ownership of, and responsibility for, their development.

Finally, the United States rejects the call for a World Health Organization-moderated pandemic treaty. An organization that cannot even admit the source of the worst pandemic in decades is ill-equipped to shepherd such an agreement.

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.74, entitled “Global health and foreign policy: rethinking health promotion as a transformative path towards improved and more sustainable well-being for all”.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte D’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, 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, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

United States of America

Abstaining:

Argentina, Belarus, Israel

Draft resolution A/79/L.74 was adopted by 139 votes to 1, with 3 abstentions (resolution 79/287).

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

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

We would like to begin by thanking Thailand for its facilitation and leadership in this process and the other members of the core group. As we collectively build a more robust global health architecture and look to better align our action, international support can be helpful as a complement to domestic efforts. The EU and its member States are playing their part in sustaining key global health initiatives, while further encouraging their shift towards horizontal health system strengthening and country-driven approaches in line with the Lusaka Agenda.

While global health is a high priority for the EU and its member States, we regret that several of our major concerns were once again ignored. We continue to dissociate ourselves from uncaveated or partially uncaveated references to the transfer of technology and know-how in operative paragraphs 5 and 20 of resolution 79/287. The transfer of technology and know-how, for which we are also calling, must be voluntary, on mutually agreed terms and in clear and unambiguous language — meaning that the process must be initiated willingly by the parties concerned, be implemented under mutually agreed conditions and follow international obligations. We regret that such language was omitted from the final text. Technology transfer that is voluntary and on mutually agreed terms will secure the most adequate, quick and efficient response to future pandemics. In addition, we have continuously expressed strong reservations about several other paragraphs and would like to put on the record that, in our understanding, no precedent is set by the following paragraphs.

When it comes to the eighteenth preambular paragraph, the EU and its member States will recognize only those references to the Doha Declaration on the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and Public Health that are

comprehensive and fully aligned with the text of that Agreement. As to the twentieth preambular paragraph, with reference to our dissociation from operative paragraphs 5 and 20, we cannot agree to the depiction of technology transfer in that paragraph. Moreover, the thirty-fifth preambular paragraph does not reflect the many dimensions of the issue. We underscore that the proper place for discussing this issue is not in this resolution, but in the upcoming high-level meeting on non-communicable diseases and mental health. The paragraph remains inconsistent with previously agreed language on fiscal and regulatory measures, in particular with the 2018 Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (resolution 73/2).

On operative paragraphs 2 and 4, the EU and its member States stress that the creation of yet additional funds and financing initiatives further deepens the harmful fragmentation of overall health financing and undermines the important objective of ensuring its sustainability, in particular in the current difficult resource-related context.

With respect to operative paragraph 3, the EU and its member States stress that international cooperation to support efforts to build and strengthen capacity in developing countries may take different forms, which may or may not include enhanced official development assistance. That will depend, inter alia, on the context and circumstances of different developing country partners. Notwithstanding the above, the EU is fully and unreservedly committed to the overarching objective of the resolution — to promote health for all. Despite those concerns and reservations, the EU voted in favour of the text.

In conclusion, the EU and its member States reiterate their support for multilateralism. We welcome the preliminary consensus on the pandemic agreement and we look forward to the next steps, including the proceedings with regard to the document, at the World Health Assembly in May. We also want to emphasize our unwavering support for, and commitment to, the World Health Organization (WHO) as the cornerstone of the global health architecture and express our support for WHO in its fulfilment of that unique convening role. Enhancing coordination, seeking synergies and complementarity, eliminating overlaps and avoiding gaps are key to rationalizing the global health ecosystem and improving its efficiency. We will continue to work together with all members in all forums on the acute and the long-term challenges to global health and look forward to engaging in that same spirit on the political declaration on non-communicable diseases and mental health.

Mr. Aristov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank the delegation of Thailand — the coordinator of the negotiating process on resolution 79/287, entitled “Global health and foreign policy: rethinking health promotion as a transformative path towards improved and more sustainable well-being for all”. We thank them for their tireless efforts to restore trust and their active attempts to achieve consensus.

Our position on this topic has been stated on many an occasion and remains unchanged. We are in favour of maintaining the document’s focus on the subject of healthcare without unduly shifting the emphasis to other issues, including human rights, for which there are dedicated arrangements within the United Nations system.

We wish to draw the attention of the Assembly to the seventeenth preambular paragraph. The end of that paragraph continues to contain highly contentious wording on marginalized segments of the population. The Russian Federation therefore disassociates itself from the consensus on that paragraph.

Mr. Schlaepfer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, we wish to thank the co-sponsors for their dedication during the negotiations on resolution 79/287. Switzerland voted in favour of the text, in particular because it recalls the importance of effective multilateral cooperation in ensuring that our populations enjoy the highest levels of physical and mental health.

Allow me to set out Switzerland's position. We would like to underscore that the transfer of technologies is successful and sustainable only when the owner of the technology decides on such a transfer and accepts the conditions for doing so. We construe the relevant passages of operative paragraph 5 as referring to technology transfers taking place under such conditions.

Mr. Greco (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the explanations of vote delivered by the representative of Poland on behalf of the European Union and its member States and wishes to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

We thank the co-facilitators for their commitment and efforts in advancing this important resolution (resolution 79/287). Italy attaches great importance to the global health agenda, as it does to food security, safety and systems transformation. In that spirit, we supported the adoption of this resolution, on global health and foreign policy. We firmly believe that health and food security are essential to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. We remain committed to that approach, including in the upcoming negotiations on the modalities for pandemic prevention preparedness and response, which we are honoured to co-facilitate with Viet Nam.

Nonetheless, we express serious concern about, and dissociate ourselves from, the language used in the thirty-fifth preambular paragraph. We appreciate the collective efforts to revise the text. However, the paragraph remains inconsistent with the previously agreed language on fiscal and regulatory measures, particularly the 2018 Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (resolution 73/2). The effectiveness of such measures in addressing unhealthy diets remains indeed highly debated, while alternative strategies, including product reformulation through public-private partnerships and approaches grounded in food education and consumer information have proven effective in improving public health outcomes.

While we supported the adoption of the resolution, Italy affirms that such measures, including taxation and marketing restrictions, fall within national jurisdictions and that the General Assembly's language should reflect the importance of policy autonomy at the national level and context-specific approaches.

Mr. Tur De La Concepción (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation wishes, first and foremost, to thank the co-facilitators of resolution 79/287 for their efforts to secure the adoption of this initiative by consensus. Unfortunately, we witnessed the text as a whole being put to a vote by the delegation of the United States. We cannot but express our deepest concern in that regard, not least given the way that it adversely affects an issue as sensitive as the promotion of global health. Had we not just witnessed that vote, we would consider such a development to be unthinkable. It would be inconceivable for a country to oppose global health, especially given that in fact, only five years ago, the coronavirus disease pandemic convulsed the entire world. What is more, we are even more enraged by the fact that the current Government of the United States, in an utterly cynical fashion, reproaches Cuba's medical cooperation programmes, which have saved — and continue to save — many lives in many geographical regions of the world, however complex or remote they may be.

We cannot forego the opportunity to reject such hypocrisy. Not only does the United States Government insist on slandering our medical cooperation with the world, but it is also hell-bent on intimidating those countries benefiting from it in order to induce them to halt those programmes. Whether it be cutting off the support that we, in solidarity, extend to the peoples of the world or asking countries to join it in voting against the resolution, the United States Government's vile behaviour when it comes to global health remains the same.

In conclusion, we would like to congratulate the proponents of this initiative on the adoption of the resolution in spite of the adversity that they have faced. We would also like to affirm, before all delegations, Cuba's commitment to continuing to promote global access to healthcare services, even in spite of all the restrictions that we are enduring as a result of the unjust blockade imposed by the United States.

Mr. Nicolino (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentine delegation appreciates the work done by the delegation of Thailand in its role as facilitator on resolution 79/287 and of the core group. We acknowledge the work done and the effort to conduct an inclusive and transparent consultation process.

Argentina values the importance of multilateralism, which is based on the principles of consultation and inclusion of different points of view, while guaranteeing all State actors the same rights and obligations. Argentina also stresses the importance of international cooperation, including on health issues, including respecting the national priorities and circumstances of each country. In that regard, every country has the sovereign right to implement its own health policies, while avoiding falling prey to "global health" approaches that promote a one-size-fits-all approach and expand the work of certain international organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), beyond their original mandates. Under that general criterion, Argentina abstained in the voting on the resolution.

With regard to the text of the resolution, Argentina recalls that it dissociated itself from the Pact for the Future (resolution 79/1) and considers that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is composed of non-legally binding aspirations that every State, in exercise of its sovereignty, has the right to interpret and pursue freely. Therefore, Argentina dissociates itself from those paragraphs related to the 2030 Agenda and from the mentions of climate change, sexual and reproductive health and the references to WHO, in view of what was already expressed by the Office of the President of the Argentine Republic in a communiqué dated 5 February. Argentina also reserves its national position on those paragraphs considered contrary to the principles of the protection of life, liberty and private property.

The Argentine Republic is committed to the equal rights of men and women and understands that the term "gender" in the context of this resolution makes women invisible, in contradiction with the objective sought. Argentina understands the definition of "gender" as agreed in article 7, paragraph 3 of the Rome Statute.

With regard to the tenth preambular paragraph, the scope and technical implications of the concept "nutrition-sensitive" in relation to food systems are unknown.

With regard to the twenty-first preambular paragraph and paragraph 18, Argentina recalls that it is assessing the impact of the most recent amendment to the International Health Regulations in the context of national sovereignty and its margin of national implementation of specific policies.

With regard to paragraph 4, Argentina emphasizes that any health financing strategy must respect the sovereignty of States and the diversity of national systems, avoiding rigid approaches that impose specific financing models on countries without considering their political, economic and regulatory contexts.

With regard to paragraph 19, Argentina opposes the WHO Pandemic Agreement, given its concern about how the Agreement may affect the sovereignty of countries and the centralization of power in decision-making on health. We believe that a single model of pandemic management does not take into account the local particularities of each country, which could result in the adoption of inappropriate or less effective measures for certain regions.

Finally, with regard to the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth preambular paragraphs, we consider that they should not interfere with or prejudice the outcomes of the

negotiation process of the United Nations Political Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases.

Mr. Poveda Brito (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Venezuela thanks the delegation of Thailand and the other members of the core group on resolution 79/287, under agenda item 127, on global health and foreign policy.

For its part, Venezuela wishes to reaffirm the importance that it attaches to the multilateral and global approach to health as a transformative element of society, as an inalienable human right and as a primary commitment of the United Nations to guaranteeing a dignified life, as established by Sustainable Development Goal 3, on health and well-being. In that regard, health must be championed and permanently guaranteed as a universal human right. Healthcare must be public, free, quality, equitable, egalitarian and complete, and not treated merely as a business that private providers, pharmaceutical companies and insurance companies use for commercial purposes, at the expense of human life itself and the suffering of millions of people, who have no choice but to go through their control mechanisms, even at the risk of our own well-being. Health cannot be reduced to being just one more commodity.

We still remember that, during the most critical moments of the coronavirus disease pandemic five years ago and the months that followed, access to treatment, medical equipment, technology and, later on, to some vaccines was denied and hindered. That was due to the obstinacy and cruelty of some Governments and economic sectors in their continued pursuit of a policy of unilateral coercive measures that, even in those moments of global uncertainty and unrest, was imposed by those extremist factions in certain countries, over and above international cooperation and solidarity. Last year, the resolution under this agenda item stated that the General Assembly

“[U]rges timely, equitable and unhindered access to safe, affordable, effective and quality medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics and other health products and technologies as one of the fundamental elements for the full realization of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health” (*resolution 78/280, para. 22*).

Regrettably, despite of the efforts of the co-facilitators and several delegations, it was not possible during this year’s negotiation process to address the issue of unhindered access to medicines, vaccines and technologies within the same scope as last year, weakening this year’s text. In any event, we hope that that will be overcome at subsequent sessions, looking ahead to the important global follow-up processes within the United Nations framework slated to take place during the next four years, including on matters related to health, which is one of the areas that is most negatively affected by the criminal application of unilateral coercive measures.

Mr. Ben Naftaly (Israel): Our delegation wishes to thank Thailand and the other facilitators for their work on resolution 79/287. We would like to express support for the focus on strengthening health promotion strategies, enhancing universal health coverage and harnessing digital health innovations. We also support the emphasis on reinforcing national ownership, promoting equitable access to healthcare and enhancing prevention, preparedness and response in relation to national, regional and global health challenges.

Nevertheless, we would like to emphasize our firm position on matters concerning technology transfer and intellectual property rights. Any transfer of technology must occur on voluntary and mutually agreed terms. Moreover, issues relating to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights should continue to be addressed within the WTO.

We further regret the reference to the right to development in the draft. While we fully support the promotion of human rights, we believe that no single human right

should be prioritized over other equally important rights in the context of discussions on global health. Health promotion efforts must be grounded in the comprehensive and indivisible framework of all human rights.

In the light of those considerations and despite our support for much of the resolution's content, our delegation decided to abstain in the voting on resolution 79/287. We will continue to work with all Member States to advance global health and aspire to reach a future consensus that reflects our shared objectives and the need for balanced and appropriate approaches to technology and innovation.

Ms. Zandi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran in explanation of vote after the voting on resolution 79/287, entitled "Global health and foreign policy: rethinking health promotion as a transformative path towards improved and more sustainable well-being for all".

My delegation actively and constructively participated in the negotiation process with the firm intention of reaching a consensual and balanced outcome. Unfortunately, the final text fails to adequately reflect the diverse perspectives and needs of all countries involved. We engaged in in-depth discussion with the co-facilitators on various occasions, but our concerns were not sufficiently addressed. We therefore found it necessary to break the silence, both in our national capacity and as part of a group of countries, in relation to specific paragraphs.

Illegal unilateral coercive measures not only negatively impact the well-being of the Iranian population and its right to life, health and access to essential medication and healthcare, but also hinder the achievement of national health development goals. We firmly believe that unhindered access to safe, affordable, effective and quality medications, vaccines, diagnostics and other health products and technologies is one of the fundamental elements and priorities for developing countries. The absence of those essential commodities presents significant challenges to promoting the health and the well-being of developing countries' populations. Therefore, as part of a group of countries, we advocated for the retention of that provision, which was taken verbatim from previous resolutions. It is deeply regrettable that such a critical consideration was overlooked.

In addition, the current version of the resolution contains non-consensual and non-internationally agreed terminology that is unacceptable to my delegation. In that regard, my delegation disassociates itself from specific terminology, in particular that involving the term "gender", as mentioned in the thirteenth and thirty-third preambular paragraphs and operative paragraphs 6 and 10, as well as from references to "vulnerable and marginalized segments of the population" in the seventeenth preambular paragraph.

Furthermore, we disassociate ourselves from the term "One Health approach" in the twenty-ninth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 7. We emphasize that a "One Health approach" is merely one of several approaches, such as the human health, animal health and agricultural health approaches. That particular approach remains under review and has not yet been finalized in intergovernmental negotiations within the World Health Organization in Geneva. In line with World Health Organization regulations, it was agreed to finalize amendments to the International Health Regulations within 18 months. The Islamic Republic of Iran will complete the amendments to the International Health Regulations by May 2025. Consequently, we disassociate ourselves from operative paragraph 18.

In conclusion, the Islamic Republic of Iran voted in favour of the resolution on the basis of our understanding that its provisions and implementation align with our national laws, regulations, religious context, cultural values and national development priorities.

Ms. Sameer (Maldives): My delegation supports the overarching objective of resolution 79/287, before us today, and voted in favour of it.

We welcome the resolution's emphasis on the promotion of health, equity and the essential pillars of sustainable well-being.

We wish to place on record our understanding and interpretative position regarding some of the language contained in operative paragraph 9. We believe that references to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights should be understood in the context of each country's national law and regulations. Accordingly, we emphasize that the implementation of those commitments must align with national legal frameworks.

In that spirit and with the above considerations in mind, we voted in favour of the resolution. We reaffirm our commitment to the health and well-being of all individuals, while upholding the principles of national sovereignty.

Mr. Mosly (Saudi Arabia): The delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would like to extend its appreciation to the co-facilitators of resolution 79/287 for their efforts and express gratitude for their cooperation and flexibility in accommodating diverse perspective throughout the negotiation process.

My delegation voted in favour of the resolution, recognizing its relevance and the importance it places on promoting health, well-being and an inclusive global policy. At the same time, we would like to place on record our position regarding the references to sexual and reproductive health services and sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights contained in the resolution, in particular in operative paragraph 9. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would like to interpret those terms in a manner that is fully consistent with our national legislation, cultural values and societal norms.

Mr. Kato (Japan): Japan warmly welcomes today's adoption of the resolution 79/287, entitled "Global health and foreign policy: rethinking health promotion as a transformative path towards improved and more sustainable well-being for all". We would also like to express our deep appreciation for the dedicated efforts of the facilitators, including Thailand, and the members of the Foreign Policy and Global Health initiative.

We are currently facing growing challenges as the world grapples with complex and interconnected crises and as divisions within the international community deepen. In that context, the adoption of the resolution, despite the many differences of opinion, reflects the renewal of our strong and unwavering commitment to fostering stronger and more transparent partnerships in the areas of digitalization and population ageing.

However, Japan regrets that, towards the end of the negotiations, the process was accelerated to push our final draft through without sufficient consultations. That resulted in a missed opportunity for reaching a common understanding on several specific policy issues, in particular regarding the transfer of technology, as referred to in operative paragraph 5. In that regard, Japan would like to reiterate the importance of the basic principles that technology transfer should be conducted on a voluntary basis and mutually agreed terms for the following reasons. Technologies, in many cases, are the property of private entities, and it is therefore unacceptable for the transfer of such technology to be imposed by any party. Accordingly, technology transfer should be voluntary. Technology transfer must occur with the consent of all parties involved. Therefore, it should be carried out on mutually agreed terms.

The adoption of this resolution is not an end, but a new beginning. Japan remains committed to continuing our best efforts to contribute to building a healthier and more resilient world.

Mr. Wang Zixu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The enjoyment of health is a shared aspiration of humankind, and safeguarding global public health security is a common pursuit of all countries. Health promotion is part and parcel of public health policy and a social strategy to broadly mobilize and coordinate concerted sectoral efforts to that end. It has therefore become a priority policy option for States. The theme of this year's resolution on global health and foreign policy (resolution 79/287) is health promotion, which is highly relevant. China therefore voted in favour of the resolution and supports its implementation by all States to strengthen health promotion, improve well-being for all and help align foreign and health policies, especially by providing the necessary financial and technical support to developing countries to strengthen their health systems.

Thailand, as the co-facilitator, and the core group of the Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative, consistently worked for consensus on the resolution. Since last year, they conducted multiple consultations, taken on board various views and patiently sought compromises. We commend their efforts in that regard. Despite some differences between Member States, they have all expressed support for the resolution and multilateralism and for cooperation on the global public health agenda; they have demonstrated solidarity and flexibility. In stark contrast, the United States did not contribute any helpful amendments over the past four months and did not engage constructively in the consultations. What the United States did was to ambush the Assembly by singlehandedly subjecting the whole text to a vote during its action stage. Such crude and gross acts of sabotage speak volumes about its unilateralism and bullying practices, and about its disregard for global public health.

While the international community has reached a broad consensus on strengthening cooperation on global public health, on promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on climate change and on the role of the World Health Organization, among other areas, the United States, in disregard of the international consensus, uses its own position on the relevant text as an excuse to push for a vote, in an attempt to block the text from reflecting the positions and consensus of the vast majority of States. By doing so, the United States clearly put its national interest above the global common good and set itself against the international community. We urge the United States to do some soul-searching and return to the right track of multilateralism, dialogue and cooperation.

Mr. Sowah (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom would like to begin by thanking Thailand for its able facilitation in this process, as well as the core group of the Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative — Brazil, France, Indonesia, Norway, Senegal and South Africa — for putting forward this important resolution (resolution 79/287) and for their work on it.

The United Kingdom is committed to pursuing ambitious global health outcomes in support of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and to addressing global health challenges in the foreign policy space. We therefore welcome this timely opportunity to discuss health promotion, which is key for enabling people to increase control over and improve their health and is vital to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are grateful to all Member States for their active engagement in that process. However, we note divergences of views on several issues, in particular with respect to paragraph 5. We maintain that the inclusion of “on voluntary and mutually agreed terms” is essential when referring to technology and knowledge transfer. It is imperative that such transfers be on voluntary and mutually agreed terms in order to maximize the chances of successful and long-standing technology transfer taking place and reducing the possibility of unequal or unfavourable terms, so that they are mutually beneficial to all parties, including those from low- and middle-income countries.

With respect to the twenty-fourth preambular paragraph, the United Kingdom would like to emphasize that, in order to ensure equitable access to digital health technologies, we must consider the needs of all, particularly marginalized and underserved populations and groups. Without that, digital exclusion risks compounding existing health inequalities. Despite those concerns, the United Kingdom is fully and unreservedly committed to the overarching objective of the resolution, which is to enhance global cooperation on health. That is why the United Kingdom voted in favour of the text.

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 127.

Agenda item 32 (*continued*)

Prevention of armed conflict

(a) Prevention of armed conflict

Ms. Jiménez de la Hoz (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Spain aligns itself with the statement made this morning by the representative of the European Union (see A/79/PV.65). In our national capacity, I would like to make a series of additional comments.

I wish to begin my statement by expressing gratitude for the work of the team that makes up the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. The report (see A/79/799) comes at a critical juncture for Syria and its people, one in which there is an opportunity to bring stability to the country and succeed in making all Syrian people feel part of their nation. Spain is staunchly committed to a peaceful and inclusive political transition in Syria, in the spirit of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) — a transition that guarantees the fundamental rights of all its citizens, including the rights of women. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, Mr. Albares Bueno, visited Damascus in January to convey that message to the Syrian caretaker authorities. The international community cannot waste this opportunity. Peace and justice cannot exist without adequate accountability. Consequently, accountability must be a crucial component of Syria's transitional process.

The work of the Mechanism, pursuant to the United Nations mandate, is vital to buttress criminal accountability processes in Syria. We therefore welcome the progress made on the implementation of the Mechanism's strategic plan, as described in the report, particularly the improvements made to its inclusive justice approach, inter alia, thematic strategies on gender, children and young people and more meaningful cooperation with Syrian civil society organizations, including victims' associations. Moreover, we underscore progress made by the Mechanism on compiling, preserving and processing the growing body of evidence through enhanced processes and the innovative use of digital technology. Those efforts are of paramount importance to preserve evidence, in line with the highest standards of integrity, for use in current and future accountability processes.

Supporting victims is a priority for Spain. We therefore support the victim-centred approach set out in the report, which focuses on their experiences and views from the perspective of their rights. We wholeheartedly welcome the approach of focusing on historically marginalized groups, in particular women and children.

The Mechanism's mounting workload demands that its funding increase accordingly. In line with its commitment to an inclusive political transition in Syria and with the precedence that it affords to accountability, Spain has pledged a voluntary contribution of €500,000 to the Mechanism. We encourage other States to likewise support the Mechanism, as the value of the technical know-how, the analytical products and the operational support that it provides is clear. Spain will continue to support the Mechanism's work and to encourage other Member States to redouble their commitments to the tool, which is crucial to accountability in Syria and key to the political transition process.

We therefore urge the interim authorities in Syria to cooperate with the Mechanism and to ensure that it has unhindered access in discharging the mandate conferred upon it by the Assembly. We have an opportunity to consolidate peace and stability in Syria in an inclusive and just manner. Together let us do our utmost not to squander this opportunity.

Mr. Zhao Haibo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Syrian people have long endured the hardships of war and crave the restoration of peace and stability in their country. The situation in Syria has now reached a critical stage. The international community should provide constructive assistance to Syria.

First, an inclusive political transition should be promoted. To that end, China hopes that all the parties concerned in Syria will, in accordance with the principles set out in Security Council resolution 2254 (2015), engage in extensive dialogue and consultation and promote internal reconciliation and a Syrian-led and -owned political transition process. China supports the role of the United Nations in that process and the efforts of the League of Arab States to assist in Syria's political transition and reconstruction.

Secondly, terrorism — the common enemy of humankind — must be combated with resolve. Terrorist forces in Syria pose a real threat, not only to Syria but also to regional and international peace and security. Security Council resolutions on terrorism must be fully and effectively implemented. China urges the interim authorities in Syria to fulfil their counter-terrorism obligations and to take every measure to combat all terrorist organizations listed by the Security Council, including the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, also known as the Turkistan Islamic Party.

Thirdly, Syria's sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity should be effectively respected. Israel's air strikes on, among other places, southern Syria violate international law and should immediately cease. The international community recognizes the Golan region as occupied Syrian territory, and the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces should be respected. Foreign forces should end their illegal military presence in Syria.

China consistently opposes any actions in violation of international humanitarian law and human rights. We advocate that all parties to the conflict abide by international law and international humanitarian law.

The establishment of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 is fraught with controversy. The fight against impunity should be aligned with the vision of a political settlement. All relevant efforts should contribute to the swift achievement of internal reconciliation in Syria and the prompt restoration of peace and stability in the region.

Mrs. Maillé (Canada): On behalf of Canada, let me start by congratulating Mr. Petit for assuming the leadership of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible

for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. We thank him for his report (see A/79/799), which, like his arrival, comes at a time of significant change in the Syrian Arab Republic, following the end of Bashar Al-Assad's rule at the end of 2024.

Canada has welcomed more than 100,000 Syrian refugees since 2015, and they have become an essential part of the fabric of today's Canada. Many Canadians stood hand in hand with their new neighbours and friends as the event of 8 December 2024 unfolded on all our television screens. That event marks a significant turning point for the Syrian people, who have endured unimaginable hardship. Canada continues to stand with the Syrian people and is ready to discuss with them how the international community can support them in rebuilding their country. To do so, Canada supported the immediate delivery of assistance into Syria to tackle the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Furthermore, Canada remains committed to supporting accountability and transitional justice efforts related to the Syrian conflict. Those efforts include the case that we filed with the Netherlands, which seeks to hold Syria accountable before the International Court of Justice for the torture and cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment and punishment of its own people carried out by the Al-Assad regime.

Through its ongoing efforts to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the heinous crimes under international law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, the Mechanism continues to play an indispensable and necessary role. The documentation and collection of evidence are critical in our common quest to uphold human rights and international law.

Canada welcomes the engagement of the Syrian authorities with the Mechanism and encourages continued collaboration to support accountability efforts in their country. We are encouraged by the message that we have heard this week about honouring Syria's mosaic, and we look forward to continued progress in the inclusive political transition.

(spoke in French)

Canada is also delighted at the Syrian authorities' announcement that they are planning to establish an independent commission on transitional justice. We encourage coordination, in due course, among the commission, the Mechanism and other key actors, such as the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. We are convinced that accountability for human rights violations and justice for the victims are essential to promoting lasting peace and reconciliation in Syria.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 32.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.