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Chairman: Mr. Rachkov (Vice-Chairman) (Belarus)

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In the absence of Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq), Mr. Rachkov (Belarus), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda item 60: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/C.3/61/L.5/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/61/L.5/Rev.1: "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly"

1. **The Chairman** said that the draft resolution under consideration contained no programme-budget implications.

2. **Ms. Hoosen** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the original sponsors, the countries members of the Group of 77 and China, said that Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Moldova (Republic of), Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

3. She made the following oral revisions: in paragraph 22, the phrase "in accordance with their commitments" should be removed from the fourth line and inserted in the first line after the words "done so"; and paragraph 23 should read: "*Welcomes* the contribution to the mobilization of resources for social development by the initiatives, on a voluntary basis, taken by groups of Member States, based on innovative financing mechanisms, including those that aim to provide further drug access at affordable prices to developing countries on a sustainable and predictable basis, such as the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID), as well as other initiatives such as the International Finance Facility for Immunization, and notes the New York Declaration of 20 September 2004,

which launched the Action against Hunger and Poverty initiative and called for further attention to raise funds urgently needed to help meet the Millennium Development Goals and to complement and ensure long-term stability and predictability to foreign aid."

4. It had come to the attention of the Group of 77 and China that, in paragraphs 9 and 14, there were discrepancies between the final negotiated text forwarded to the Secretariat and the document the latter had produced. They took strong exception to the Secretariat's amending texts without prior consultation, even for editorial reasons. In order to reflect accurately the negotiated text, paragraph 9 should read: "*Stresses* that an enabling environment is a critical precondition for achieving equity and social development and that while economic growth is essential, entrenched inequality and marginalization are an obstacle to the broad-based and sustained growth required for sustainable, inclusive people-centred development, and recognize the need to balance and ensure complementarity between measures to achieve growth with measures to achieve economic and social equity for there to be an impact on overall poverty levels;". Paragraph 14 should read: "*Welcomes* the ministerial declaration, adopted at the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2006 of the Economic and Social Council, on "Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development;".

5. The draft resolution addressed the three core priorities for social development — poverty eradication, full employment and social integration, identified at the 2005 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, and recognized the need to focus on accelerating the achievement of agreed targets. It stressed that an enabling environment was a critical precondition for achieving equity and social development and that international cooperation was crucial. In that regard, it aimed to strengthen the role of the Commission for Social Development in the follow-up and review of the World Summit. The draft established that an enabling environment was a critical precondition for achieving social development, and further recognized that international cooperation had an essential role to play in the effective implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. In conclusion, she hoped the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

6. *Draft resolution A/C.3/61/L.5/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted.*

7. **Ms. Shestack** (United States of America) said her delegation was pleased to join the consensus on the draft resolution but wished to explain its position on paragraphs 22 and 23. With reference to paragraph 22, which would have the General Assembly urge developed countries that had not yet done so to make concrete efforts towards meeting the targets of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.2 per cent of GNP to least developed countries, the United States had far exceeded its pledge made at Monterrey regarding ODA. Her country had consistently opposed numerical aid targets for two primary reasons.

8. Firstly, with reference to paragraph 22, it believed that aid should be increased to countries committed to governing well and should be tied to results rather than to an arbitrary figure. Secondly, privately donated resources dwarfed ODA, so that the focus on a small percentage of funds was ineffective. With reference to paragraph 23, which welcomed innovative financing mechanisms that contributed to the mobilization of resources for social development, as far as her Government was concerned, the sources for financing such initiatives came from the traditional sources of ODA, the taxpayers. The main innovation seemed to be the increased lack of transparency in the transfer of those resources.

Agenda item 99: International drug control
(*continued*) (A/C.3/61/L.8/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/61/L.8/Rev.1: "International cooperation against the world drug problem"

9. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that the draft resolution had not yet been cleared for action, because the Budget Division had not yet received from the relevant office in Vienna the information concerning paragraph 1 (a), which it needed in order to revise its statement regarding programme budget implications. He requested that action on the draft be deferred for a later stage.

10. **Ms. Feller** (Mexico) expressed surprise at the news, as the revised draft had been submitted in good time. She requested the Secretariat to arrange for action to be taken on the draft as soon as possible.

11. **Mr. Cumberbatch Miguén** (Cuba) said his delegation was quite concerned at a number of irregularities in the work of the Secretariat, such as the cessation of interpretation well before the end of the previous day's meeting with the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, an error in that day's Journal concerning draft resolution A/C.3/61/L.5/Rev.1, and the need to delay action on draft resolution A/C.3/61/L.8/Rev.1. The scheduling changes necessitated by such mistakes on the part of the Secretariat made it difficult for many delegations to consult with their capitals.

12. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said the Secretariat had noted the grievances expressed by the representatives of Mexico and Cuba and would endeavour to rectify the situation. Regarding draft resolution A/C.3/61/L.8/Rev.1, he expected the information from Vienna to be available the following day, which would enable the Budget Division to revise its statement so that action could be taken on the draft resolution on Monday, 30 October.

Agenda item 67: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*) (A/61/36, 97, 220 and 280)

(b) **Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms** (*continued*) (A/61/211, 267, 281, 287, 289, 306, 311, 312, 324, 325, 338, 340, 348, 352, 353, 384, 464, 465, 476, 506 and 513)

(c) **Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives** (*continued*) (A/61/276, 349, 360, 369, 374, 469, 470, 475, 489, 504 and 526)

13. **Ms. Kohli** (Switzerland) said that dealing with human rights on an ongoing basis made for greater flexibility of the system as a whole and afforded a gradual approach and regular follow-up of urgent issues and serious human rights violations. The question of the relationship between the Third Committee and the Human Rights Council, particularly the distribution of work between them, remained unresolved. With the Council going through a period of consolidation, it was too early to give a definitive answer.

14. However, there had to be an appropriate balance between the two bodies in order to avoid duplication

and make the system effective and credible. The presentation of special procedure reports to both the Committee and the Council — within a matter of weeks — was duplication of effort, and other approaches should be considered. General Assembly resolution 60/251 on the Human Rights Council set out two points of contact between the Council and the Assembly: recommendations by the Council on the development of international law, and the Council's annual report to the Assembly. Given the current transitional phase, the compromise proposal by the Philippines — which envisaged a mixed allocation between the plenary Assembly and the Third Committee — correctly reflected the interaction between the Council and the General Assembly. However, the Council had the autonomy to adopt certain decisions and recommendations and to take initiatives, for which Assembly approval was not required.

15. Not to address country situations would be incomprehensible and dangerous. In the framework of reforms, however, the manner in which country situations were treated should be changed, with preference given to a cooperative approach aimed at strengthening national protection systems. The universal periodic review was not the only instrument that could be used; country situations addressed outside that framework should involve several stages of discussion, the first of which could lead to initial recommendations, while a second phase of more substantive discussions could, if necessary, lead to the drafting of specific recommendations on technical cooperation.

16. The Council should have recourse to the review and the adoption of condemnatory resolutions only as a last resort and in situations where the Government concerned was unwilling to cooperate. Another modality available in urgent situations was the special session, which should examine all violations committed in a non-selective and balanced manner on the basis of the law. But all efforts should be guided by a rights-based approach. Establishing a system and practice that suited everyone required further reflection in a constructive spirit and with a desire for real change.

17. **Ms. Moreira** (Ecuador) said that her Government agreed with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants in terms of the

relevant rights that the States of origin, transit and destination needed to respect. While countries of origin and of destination shared the responsibility of seeking solutions to the issue of migration, the role that countries of transit played in strengthening the fight against trafficking in persons and the corruption that led to that scourge should not be overlooked.

18. Her delegation welcomed the recent High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which had recognized the positive aspects of migration for migrants and their families and for countries of origin and of destination, and the challenges in the fight against illicit migration. She agreed with the Special Rapporteur that the issue of migration could not merely be analysed from an economic perspective; measures to counter the negative effects of migration needed to focus on the human aspect of the persons affected.

19. Her delegation reiterated that the conditions set out by countries receiving migrants from developing countries were not in keeping with the trends of free trade and the free transit of persons, and were highly restrictive and thus, conducive to irregular migration. In that regard, she stressed the principle of shared responsibility, as under the Asunción Declaration adopted at the South American Conference on Migration.

20. Ecuador was one of the few countries which was both a country of origin and of destination of migrants, and also received displaced persons from other nations, which made it the main country of refuge in Latin America. In that respect, it needed to draw up new policies, with support from the international community. Her country had undertaken a number of concerted actions with other countries and international bodies, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as well as civil society and the public sector, and through a bilateral agreement with Spain guaranteeing work contracts with equal conditions for nationals and migrants.

21. The principle of sovereignty should not undermine the rights of migrants, but should guarantee them. The regularization of migrants benefited both countries of origin and countries of destination. Integration schemes should facilitate migration and broaden the aspect of the free transit of persons, in line with that of goods, services and capital.

22. **Mr. Fakhroo** (Qatar) said that the universality of human rights should not detract from the need to respect the diversity of civilizations and cultures and that lack of development should not serve as a pretext for neglecting human rights. Human rights went hand in hand with development, peace and security, which in turn depended on the right of peoples to self-determination and the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of class, ethnicity or religion.

23. Qatar had established many institutions to protect human rights and achieve a partnership between Government and civil society. It was working closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to take the final steps for establishing the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region in Qatar. His country had recently hosted a number of international human rights gatherings, and was scheduled to host the upcoming sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies.

24. **Ms. Rashidova** (Uzbekistan) said that her Government had taken steps to establish effective mechanisms to protect the rights and freedoms of its citizens, to reform the judicial system and guarantee a genuinely independent judicial branch and to create new democratic national extrajudicial human rights institutions. It should be noted that such reforms were taking place in stages. They were aimed at promoting the rule of law and social justice; human rights protection; and the separation of powers.

25. Uzbekistan had established entirely new national human rights institutions within the legislative and executive branches in the light of the Vienna Declaration and Paris Principles, including the post of a parliamentary human rights ombudsman in 1995. Efforts were being made to redress civil rights violations, revise legislation, raise awareness among the population about their rights and develop international cooperation. A national human rights centre prepared and submitted her Government's periodic reports to the six main United Nations human rights treaty bodies and promoted human rights education. NGOs such as the Bar Association and others played a particular role in human rights protection. Their activities made it possible to carry out the principle: "From a strong State to a strong civil society".

26. In addition to reform measures to ensure independent courts, criminal and criminal-procedure legislation had been adopted to ensure that the rights and interests of persons were protected. As a result, the number of persons sentenced to prison in the previous three years had decreased from 76,000 to 34,000. In addition, presidential decrees had been adopted on the repeal of the death penalty and on transferring to the courts the power to issue detention orders. Lastly, her Government was determined to continue its thorough democratic reforms in the area of human rights protection and stood ready to cooperate with the relevant United Nations human rights bodies and mechanisms in that area.

27. **Mr. Chabar** (Morocco) said that his Government had embarked on an irreversible path to democracy, the rule of law and good governance while drawing on the tolerant precepts of Islam, its time-honoured civilizational values and its international commitments in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, the Moroccan Constitution reaffirmed his Government's adherence to universally recognized human rights. Genuine strengthening of the rule of law was the best guarantee for attaining the sustainable development of the individual and community alike. Widely recognized as a crossroads for different civilizations and cultures, Morocco had emerged as a strong actor for peace, tolerance and understanding between nations and continued its efforts to promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

28. Morocco had ratified most of the international human rights instruments and undertaken to submit regular national reports on the implementation of its multilateral commitments. The previous five years had witnessed a considerable increase in the pace of reforms, notably in the adoption of new laws, the harmonization of national legislation with international commitments and the setting up of governmental structures and national follow-up institutions.

29. Efforts to promote human rights were reflected in a series of legislative reforms involving civil and political rights in particular as well as the relevant economic rights under the international human rights instruments to which Morocco was a party. Those reforms addressed penal and criminal-procedure law as well as prison administration, entry and stay of foreign nationals in Morocco, political parties, sexual harassment in the workplace, freedom of the press and other areas. In addition, his Government had adopted

legislation to combat torture, as defined under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

30. National human rights institutions such as the Advisory Council on Human Rights had been reorganized on the basis of the Paris Principles. His Government had ordered inquiries into complaints of torture and continued its efforts at the regulatory and institutional level to put a definitive end to the past legacy of forced disappearance and arbitrary detention through the rehabilitation of victims. An Ombudsman was responsible for mediating between citizens and public authorities and investigated complaints of administrative acts deemed unfair or illegal. Lastly, a national institution had been established to promote and protect Berber culture and heritage and integrate the Berber people into the national education system.

31. Morocco was promoting national human rights education at all levels, including institutions which trained judges and State officials. In an effort to enhance the status of women, his Government had adopted a new Family Code, which made gender equality one of the foundations of Moroccan society. It had also launched an initiative to reduce social inequalities and achieve sustainable social and economic development based on local government, good governance and rational and transparent resource management. Morocco had made human rights and fundamental freedoms one of the pillars of its national and foreign policies and would spare no effort to promote that cause within the Human Rights Council.

32. **Ms. Na-Allah** (Niger) said that her Government had had in place a multiparty system since November 1990 in response to political demands put forward by trade unions, NGOs and civil society. Much progress had been made in the area of human rights since that time thanks to a number of measures taken and mechanisms established. The political and institutional reforms of the previous decade had aimed at strengthening the democratic process and rule of law. The coming to power of her Government in 1999 following democratic presidential and legislative elections had ended a decade of political and institutional instability and paved the way for policies to promote sustainable development.

33. The advent of democracy in the Niger made the rise of a dynamic civil society possible. There were a number of human rights organizations in the Niger

which continued to grow and develop, including the National Commission for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which monitored the human rights situation in the country, put forward recommendations to the public authorities on relevant legislation and organized workshops and seminars. It was made up of Government officials, traditional leaders as well as members of human rights organizations, women's organizations, the bar, professional associations, trade unions and others.

34. The Niger had ratified most of the international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and others. Lastly, the Niger was witnessing the emergence of a thriving private press, which was increasingly professional, making objective information available to the entire population.

35. **Mrs. Blum** (Colombia) said that her Government attached importance to the right to development, which was crucial to the full exercise of other rights and fundamental freedoms, and was implementing policies to strengthen its human and social capital in that context. She called on the international community to strengthen cooperation on that matter. Her country supported all the international initiatives aimed at jointly combating the scourge of terrorism. The measures that it took in that regard, including through multilateral treaties, domestic legislation and institutional procedures for investigating, trying and penalizing terrorist activities, were applied on the basis of respect for the rule of law and human rights.

36. Colombia had ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and looked forward to the report that the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons would be introducing before the Human Rights Council about his recent visit to Colombia. Her country had a national programme for displaced persons which was based on dignity and the restitution of their rights, and it was a Government priority to ensure the social and economic integration of displaced persons in their places of origin or resettlement. The programme included such activities as the provision of emergency care for all displaced persons, which had covered 82 per cent of affected persons, and the promotion of

the return of families, with assistance from the State and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

37. Colombia had made particular progress in ensuring the right to health and education of displaced persons, including through subsidized health care, guaranteed access to education for children, training for adults, and housing subsidies for families, and also, provided monthly subsidies to families in vulnerable situations or extreme poverty. The Government had adopted a range of security measures — including ensuring the presence of State forces in every municipality of the country and the massive demobilization of illegally armed groups — which had helped bring about a gradual drop in the number of new cases of displacements since 2002.

38. A series of recommendations in the report of the Representative were being implemented. The country had legal and policy frameworks specifically governing the protection of internally displaced persons and had a national body assigned to that task. Significant resources were allocated to the programme for them. Lastly, she welcomed the contributions that various countries had provided to her Government to enable implementation of relevant programmes.

39. **Ms. Petersen** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the Venezuelan Constitution established that all treaties, covenants and conventions concerning human rights signed and ratified by Venezuela had constitutional rank and took precedence over domestic laws where their provisions relating to the enjoyment and exercise of such rights were more favourable than those established by the Constitution and national laws. The Office of the Ombudsman was responsible for ensuring that those rights were fulfilled. It was imperative to ensure unconditional respect for the universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness, interdependence and mutually reinforcing nature of all human rights and compliance by States with the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Economic, social and cultural rights should be treated on an equal footing with civil and political rights.

40. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, convinced of the importance of fostering international cooperation in order to ensure the exercise of all rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, had made every effort to engage in cooperation activities, both as a beneficiary and as a provider of international

assistance. It had implemented various social programmes aimed at guaranteeing rights in the areas of health, education at all levels, food and food security, from which all sectors of society had benefited, but particularly the most vulnerable and excluded individuals and groups. Throughout South America, her country had conducted activities in the area of visual health and cooperation in education with a view to eradicating illiteracy in the region.

41. The use of human rights issues as a means of advancing political interests, particularly by powerful countries, undermined understanding among nations, violated the principles and norms established under the Charter of the United Nations and were detrimental to international peace and security. Selectivity, lack of objectivity and political manipulation also undermined the credibility of institutions, as in the case of the Commission on Human Rights. In that regard, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela firmly rejected any attempt to extend the competence to address human rights issues to United Nations bodies that did not otherwise have such competence. It condemned the application of unilateral coercive measures by any State, irrespective of the nature of such measures or the methods used to apply them, as a means of preventing another State from exercising the right to self-determination. Such measures were at odds not only with the Charter of the United Nations but also with international law, and their consequences for trade and development had a detrimental impact on the enjoyment and exercise of human rights, particularly among the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

42. With respect to forced disappearances, a special commission had been established under the authority of the Venezuelan National Assembly to investigate murders, disappearances and torture of Venezuelan nationals during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The will of the Government to combat impunity was demonstrated by the fact that persons found guilty by the Commission of human rights violations committed during that period, irrespective of rank, were punishable by imprisonment for a term of three to 30 years. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was committed to combating all terrorist acts and practices, which violated all human rights. However, it appeared that the means used by some States purportedly to combat terrorism were themselves akin to terrorist practices. In that regard, it should be recalled that Venezuelan terrorist and fugitive from justice

Luis Clemente Posada Carriles remained under the protection of the United States Government, which refused to comply with its obligation to extradite him. States should form a united front in the fight against terrorism, and should not attempt to draw a distinction between “good terrorism” and “bad terrorism”. No act of terrorism or violation of human rights could be justified.

43. In addressing migration, it was important to take into account the deep-rooted causes underlying the displacement of persons from their countries of origin, which had an impact on the living conditions of migrants and their families. All States concerned shared responsibility for addressing the phenomenon, and should reaffirm the need to respect the human rights of migrants and their families, irrespective of their migrant status. The proposed construction of a wall along the border between the United States of America and Mexico was a unilateral measure that contravened the principles of international law, contradicted the ideals of integration, unity and respect for human rights and disregarded the value of dialogue in understanding the sensitivity of the migration issue. In the past, walls and barriers had served no good purpose, and such actions could not be construed as positive in any way.

44. The sovereign power of a State to regulate the entry and stay of foreign nationals on its territory and to determine the status of migrants should be exercised in accordance with international human rights law. Her country therefore rejected any attempt in the region to discriminate against or criminalize migrants in contravention of the principles and norms of mutual respect that should prevail among States, particularly those linked by geographical proximity. In that regard, it reiterated its absolute and unconditional solidarity with Mexico. While the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela supported all actions aimed at building the capacity of States to promote, protect and guarantee human rights through their national institutions, States themselves bore primary responsibility in that regard. The principles set out in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action were the key to successful multicultural dialogue with a view to achieving world peace through genuine respect for diversity.

45. **Ms. Núñez Mordoche** (Cuba) said that the establishment of the Human Rights Council had appeared to usher in a new era of cooperation in the area of human rights, following lengthy negotiations

during which some had sought to place the Council at the service of their geopolitical interests and to use it as a court in which to judge others. Now, however, those same States were once again making vociferous statements and assertions against allegedly troublesome countries on the basis of false, incomplete and manipulated information, yet at the same time turned a blind eye to the flagrant and widespread human rights violations committed daily by their allies. Such States had neither the moral right nor the authority to criticize or judge other societies.

46. Genuine dialogue on cooperation on human rights issues called for change in the unjust international order in which neoliberal globalization had excluded the majority of the world population from access to the planet’s resources and certain States sought profits at the expense of other countries — particularly through overexploitation of the natural resources of countries of the South — without regard for environmental degradation. It was intolerable that the very countries that denied developing countries access to markets and new technologies, controlled the international financial institutions, insisted that onerous foreign debt continue to be paid and encouraged cuts in social expenditure, while turning a blind eye to widespread hunger, poverty, illiteracy and lack of access to education in developing countries, should lecture others on good governance and the rule of law.

47. States must seek social justice through respect for the sovereign control by States of their natural resources and full exercise of the right to self-determination. Yet the path towards true social justice was fraught with the dangers of condemnation, stigmatization and defamation by States that were prepared to take brutal and coercive unilateral measures against those that dared to challenge them. The triumph of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959 had laid the foundations for the fuller enjoyment of all human rights by Cuban nationals and the elimination of discrimination based on gender, skin colour or social class. The United States of America had condemned the Revolution, yet had been unable to prove even a single extrajudicial execution or disappearance. Cuban prisoners had never been abused or humiliated. Cuba cooperated with its sister nations; it sent doctors to remote areas, conducted activities to increase literacy and offered scholarships to youths from any social background, without demanding anything in return.

48. The so-called “democracy” that the United States of America had brought to Cuba for more than 60 years of neocolonial domination had resulted only in corruption and negligence in the face of the hardships suffered by the great majority of the population, who were mired in hunger, illiteracy and poverty, and the imposition of brutal dictatorships that had sought to silence the justified demands of the people. The sovereign right of the Cuban people to self-determination had been subject to an intense campaign of aggression promoted and financed by successive United States administrations, and their human rights denied as a result of the criminal policy of economic, commercial and financial blockade. The new measures taken by the current United States administration, set out in the report of the so-called “Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba”, constituted a further attempt to end the freedom and independence of the Cuban people, destroy the society that they had chosen for themselves and undermine their rights.

49. In order to strengthen international cooperation on human rights, the principles of universality, objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity must form the pillars of that cooperation. The initiatives promoted by Cuba within the framework of the Third Committee were aimed at restoring the international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights could be fully realized. The future work of the Human Rights Council would be useful only if double standards, politicization and blackmail were eliminated. The promotion and protection of all human rights would only be possible in a different world.

50. **Mr. Kim Pil-woo** (Republic of Korea) welcomed the significant progress achieved in 2006 in promoting and protecting human rights, particularly the launch of the Human Rights Council, which reflected the political will of Member States to achieve progress in the area of human rights and their recognition that peace and development could not be achieved unless all rights were fully respected and exercised. The Republic of Korea commended the Council’s achievements in establishing international standards through its adoption of the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Forced Disappearance and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It also welcomed the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the

finalization of the text of the draft international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

51. However, the continuing violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in many parts of the world, particularly in Darfur and the Middle East as a result of ongoing conflict and violence, were deeply troubling and severely damaged the cause of human rights advocacy. Urgent action must be taken to address such abuses and to ameliorate the conditions that gave rise to them. The Republic of Korea was concerned that the Human Rights Council had not yet taken any decisions on concrete measures to address those situations. While much of the Council’s work in its first year must inevitably focus on institution-building, the Council was looked to for appropriate action to help meet the wide range of challenges that urgently required its attention.

52. The Republic of Korea had been actively involved in the work of the human rights bodies within the United Nations system, and was acting on the pledges that it had made when presenting its candidature for membership of the Human Rights Council. At the national level, it was taking the necessary steps to withdraw its reservations to and ratify United Nations human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and was also preparing to accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

53. In accordance with United Nations recommendations, the Republic of Korea was drafting a national plan of action on human rights for 2007-2011, which would contain various proposals for policies relating to the protection of socially vulnerable and minority groups. It was also actively promoting the amendment of existing legislation and the introduction of new legal provisions for the advancement of human rights in a wide range of areas, including gender equality, labour rights and minorities. Human rights issues must be pursued in tandem with security and development. To that end, it was necessary to achieve tangible results and maintain the momentum generated by the Human Rights Council.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.