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47th plenary meeting

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Official Records

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Viinanen (Finland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda items 48 (continued), 114, 120 and 121

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

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/64/176, A/64/228 and A/64/350)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

The Acting President: In connection with agenda item 48, members will recall that the Assembly commemorated the fifteenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development under the agenda item at its 17th to 19th plenary meetings on 12 and 13 October 2009. Members will also recall that the reports of the Secretary-General issued as documents A/64/87 and A/64/263 have already been discussed at the 26th plenary meeting of the Assembly on 27 October 2009. In connection with agenda item 114, the Assembly adopted resolution 64/1 at its 15th plenary meeting on 6 October 2009.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU).

There are many aspects to the implementation of the Millennium Summit. I would like to focus today on one important issue: climate change and its possible security implications. The watershed report of the Secretary-General on this topic, contained in document A/64/350, could not be more timely. It marks the beginning of a new field of work for the United Nations.

Three considerations underpin the European Union perspective: first, the impacts of climate change are universal; secondly, left unchecked global warming will sooner or later affect us all — rich or poor, North or South; and thirdly, it is not a challenge only to some, but of concern to us all. That implies that our response must be global. Since climate change brings shared challenges, we need to respond with a comprehensive approach at all levels and with all policy tools at our disposal. No country can tackle these issues in isolation.

There is an urgent need for action. The security risks posed by climate change are real. They are already being felt. They are having an impact on people's lives. One key measure will be a common push in the lead-up to Copenhagen and a bold agreement there.

By redrawing the maps of water availability, food security, disease prevalence, population distribution and coastal zones, climate change will have serious implications for the security and development of entire

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regions. We need to build emergency preparedness capacity for both the immediate and the longer terms, as well as be prepared to address a number of unprecedented and unpredictable challenges. The Hyogo Framework for Action gives us an important platform in building resilience of nations and communities to disasters.

The poor and vulnerable are most at risk. One third of Africans live in areas prone to drought. By 2020, an additional 75 to 250 million Africans are likely to be at risk of water stress. Sea-level rise, coastal flooding, changing rainfall patterns and drought could displace as many as 200 million people in Africa by 2050. Scientists draw the conclusion that climate change threatens to exacerbate those trends and undermine Governments' ability to ensure security and sustainable development.

For people of many small island developing States, the link between climate change, development and security is a question not only of regional stability, but also of national survival. In response to sea-level rise and salt water inundation, relocation strategies are being formulated by some nations and opportunities provided for citizens to migrate. The international community will have to tackle the legal and political implications of migration caused by climate-related events and Stateless citizens within a not so distant future.

In the Arctic region, the effects of climate change are plainly visible with melting sea ice, the melting of the Greenland icecap and thawing permafrost. Coastal erosion has already made it necessary to relocate entire communities. Fortunately, in that region international cooperation structures that bring together the States and the indigenous peoples involved are already in place. Such cooperation fosters confidence and helps to address transboundary issues, adapt to new conditions, maintain stability and avoid conflict.

So how can we continue our efforts to address the challenges before us? The European Union would like to highlight five areas where action is needed.

First, we need a transformation of our economies to mitigate climate change. We must take bold and determined action to reduce our collective emissions of greenhouse gases. It is necessary to limit global temperature rise below 2 degrees. Developed countries will have to take the lead with binding commitments, and developing countries, especially the advanced

emerging economies, will also have to contribute with intensified actions.

Secondly, we need to focus our efforts. The Secretary-General's landmark report proposes two courses of action. One is to focus on problem areas with high-impact and irreversible consequences; the other is to accelerate the identification of threat minimizers. It is a question of creating positive spirals of change and making systematic use of available tools. A focused research effort will help to continuously improve our understanding of the drivers of climate change and the options we have to reduce its impact.

Thirdly, we need to identify and strengthen the interconnections between climate change and security, between climate change and development, and between adaptation and mitigation. Adaptation is about forms of development in which the capacity to manage risk determines progress. There are synergies between adaptation measures and emission reductions that should be explored. Investment in mitigation and adaptation should go hand in hand with efforts to address and respond to the international security threat posed by climate change. International cooperation should be enhanced in the areas of early warning, conflict management and peacebuilding in the context of global warming. These actions should all be viewed as part of a preventive security policy.

Fourthly, adaptation to climate change is a challenge for every country. Special attention must be paid to the most vulnerable groups and the poor. It is crucial to strengthen the ability of individuals, societies and ecosystems to deal with this challenge. Adaptation in the agricultural sector will be decisive for food security and the livelihoods of poor people. A growing body of scientific work also shows the importance of applying a gender perspective to adaptation. The promotion of good governance, human rights and gender equality are threat minimizers. They are desirable in their own right but can also help lower the risk of climate-related insecurity. Regional and multinational adaptation activities can have trust-creating and peacebuilding effects.

Last but not least, because the agenda is so all-encompassing, a multilateral response is warranted. The United Nations has the capacity like no other organization to address this issue in all its dimensions and must take the lead. The report of the Secretary-

General is the first of its kind and has the potential to serve as a vital point of departure for the United Nations. While the way forward outlined by the Secretary-General is a good basis for further work, the EU would have appreciated more specific recommendations. The role of the United Nations in terms of responsibilities, capacities and resources should be made even more explicit. The European Union would hope that the Secretary-General can make use of some of our proposals on how the United Nations system could address emerging challenges.

It is important that we continue to build knowledge and discuss solutions jointly at the global level. In March 2008, the highest decision-making body of the EU, the European Council, considered the impact of climate change on international security, how it affects Europe's own security and how the European Union should respond to it. This assessment was followed up with more specific recommendations for action. As a consequence, we have enhanced our conflict prevention and crisis management, but we need to improve analysis and early warning capabilities. The European Union cannot do this alone. We must now step up our efforts, in particular with the United Nations.

Climate change and its security implications are an item that should be kept regularly on the agenda of the General Assembly, underpinned by regular reports of the Secretary-General. The European Union also supports consideration by the Security Council on this issue on a regular basis, if necessary.

The first and most urgent step on the road to security in the face of climate change is a global, ambitious and comprehensive agreement in Copenhagen. It is the European Union's profound belief that there is no alternative to a successful outcome of the meeting in Copenhagen. An ambitious and binding deal is in the interests and is the responsibility of all nations.

Mr. Beck (Palau): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) represented at the United Nations, namely, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country, Palau.

The Pacific small island developing States welcome the report of the Secretary-General contained

in document A/64/350, entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications", and we would like to sincerely thank the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the Division for Sustainable Development for their lead role in preparing such a comprehensive and substantive report in such a short period of time. We have a small and distinct window for action and we appreciate the urgency with which the Secretary-General has approached this matter.

From the report, it is clear that the security implications of climate change are not theoretical but real. We note in particular the identification in the report of emerging climate change-related threats which merit "the focused attention ... of the international community" (A/64/350, p. 2). These threats are ones which, in the words of the report, are "those that appear highly likely, are large in magnitude, may unfold relatively swiftly, and are unprecedented in nature" (*ibid.*). These threats include loss of territory, statelessness and increased numbers of displaced persons.

All of these threats have occurred or will imminently occur in the Pacific. It is the reality and immediacy of these threats that initially motivated the Pacific small island developing States to sponsor resolution 63/281 containing the request for the Secretary-General's report. It is this reality that makes it increasingly critical that all relevant organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council, take up this issue.

The report first outlines the threat to human well-being in the fields of agriculture, water, health, coastal areas, human settlements and infrastructure. Indeed, these threats are already being felt in the Pacific SIDS and have been comprehensively covered in our submission, as well as addressed in the national submissions of our members, which are available on the DESA website.

Next, the report goes on to describe the adverse impacts of climate change on economic development. We have covered these aspects in our submissions and wish to reiterate here that improvement and degeneration in security and development are mutually reinforcing. The Pacific SIDS are pleased that the international community has started to look at climate change in a holistic manner. We are no longer debating — nor should we continue to debate — whether development or security is more important. I

think we all now agree that they exist side by side and that development is not possible without security.

In this respect, chapter V of the report, entitled “Threats from uncoordinated coping”, breaks new ground. It pulls the various elements together and demonstrates how the adverse effects of climate change, both standing by themselves and in conjunction with other effects, present a clear threat to security. It is of particular concern to us that

“in the case of small island developing States, the adverse impacts of climate change are already increasing the rate of domestic migration and relocation, with people from rural areas and outlying islands moving to urban centres as they lose their livelihoods and lands owing to natural disasters and sea-level rise. This migration is placing enormous strains on food, housing, education, health, and water supplies, as recipient communities struggle to accommodate the number of people migrating” (A/64/350, para. 57).

The report further points to the estimates of the International Organization for Migration, which forecast as between 50 million and 350 million the number of persons who may have to migrate owing to climate change and environmental degradation by 2050.

The report further points to the uncertainties of the international legal framework for responding to displacement caused by the impacts of climate change. At the same time, and this is not theoretical, the adverse impacts of climate change have already caused internal displacement in the Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands. In some Pacific SIDS, internal relocation is simply not feasible because of geographical constraints. Displacement to a neighbouring or third country might be the only option if climate change continues at the current or increased rate without significant and urgent mitigation by the international community.

Yet, while international law is not clear, according to an analysis by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, some people forced to migrate by the effects of climate change might be protected by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, whereas others might not be protected. There is little appetite for expanding the refugee Convention to explicitly cover

those displaced by climate change, given the fear that this risks lowering the protection currently afforded all refugees. The discussion on what needs to be done to fill this legal vacuum has already begun and such discussions should be well timed.

However, under no circumstances can efforts to protect climate-displaced people be used as an excuse for inaction on mitigation and adaptation. We must focus our efforts first and foremost on preventing such forced migration and providing people of the Pacific with the necessary resources to protect the integrity of their island homes, their unique cultural identity and their ability to provide for their means of subsistence. Leaving ancestral homelands and, in the most tragic scenario, leaving the entire country behind is a devastating and unacceptable prospect for our people.

I will now turn to chapter VI, which in many ways is the most remarkable chapter in the report. It is entitled “Threat of loss of territory and statelessness”. The report shows an alarming but correct example when it states:

“In the case of some small island developing States, sea-level rise presents perhaps the ultimate security threat, jeopardizing the very existence of small low-lying countries such as the Maldives, where 80 per cent of land is less than one metre above sea level and could therefore disappear over the next 30 years.” (*ibid.*, para. 71)

We are talking about the survival of nations, peoples and unique cultures, all of which are threatened by the adverse impacts of climate change.

In addition, international law has never had to contend with the disappearance of a country. There are complex political issues regarding the most appropriate means to address the rights of affected populations, partial and complete loss of sovereign territory and the effects on territorial waters and exclusive economic zones. The implications for affected people in terms of human rights, as well as the economic losses for the countries concerned and the issue of sovereignty, are all matters of first impression as well as extraordinary international importance.

The final chapter in the report tries to point a way forward on preventing and responding to the emerging threats. Mitigation and adaptation are two important elements, both of which are dealt with under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change process. We are now just days away from the Copenhagen Conference, and the Pacific SIDS, as members of the Alliance of Small Island States, expect that all leaders will explicitly ensure our survival, security and territorial integrity by making firm international commitments through legally binding instruments to be adopted at Copenhagen.

The political options on climate change have now been clearly outlined in negotiation texts. The choice before leaders at Copenhagen will be whether or not the global community has sufficient political will to ensure our security through legal instruments with serious, specific action on emissions by all nations. If we fail, we will fail ourselves and future generations by delaying the decisions that need to be made now. Flimsy moral sentiments expressed at Copenhagen will be no substitute for legally binding treaties and will do little to ensure the security of the most vulnerable among our membership.

We look to Copenhagen for an agreement that will, among other things, use the avoidance of adverse climate change impacts on small island developing States as one of the key benchmarks for assessing its appropriateness, consistent with the precautionary principle and the principle of prevention. Such an agreement must include a package of mitigation activities now, up to and beyond 2012 that provides for the long-term stabilization of atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations at well below 350 parts per million carbon dioxide-equivalent levels; limits global average surface temperature increases to well below 1.5 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels; and provides for global greenhouse gas emissions to peak by 2015 and decline thereafter.

As I have stated before, the report of the Secretary-General greatly enriches the debate on climate change. It points out where the development aspects and the security implications overlap, as well as where they stand apart. In fact, the General Assembly, by adopting the historic resolution 63/281, has taken the same view. The report makes it clear that gaps remain in how the international system responds to the security implications of climate change. It is now time to update the tools used to address those implications.

The linkage between climate change and security needs to be a permanent focus of deliberations in the United Nations. We reiterate our call for the inclusion

of “security and climate change” as an annual agenda item in the United Nations and for formal recognition of the link between security and climate change. We are already actively engaged in the General Assembly, in the Economic and Social Council and at the Framework Convention. It is time that the Security Council complement the discussion by looking at the appropriate aspects which fall under its own mandate.

I now add the following remarks in my national capacity for the Republic of Palau. The Secretary-General’s excellent report, as we have said, envisions that international peace and security will likely be affected by statelessness. This chilling conclusion means that, for the first time in the history of the world, we are contemplating the loss of Member States. Up to now, the membership of this body has only grown with time. How will we feel when that trend is reversed? The international community must address itself to this reality with the mechanisms which are available to it.

We submit that only the Security Council has the extraordinary powers to deal with threats like this. No, we do not expect the Council to turn back the rising seas; but rather, we challenge the Council to creatively use its powers under Chapter VII of the Charter to develop enforceable emissions targets and to give teeth to what is now, apparently, an ineffectual voluntary process.

Mrs. Kolontai (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Secretary-General’s many reports on implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) clearly attest to the fact that the impact of the complex multifaceted crisis threatens the achievement by 2015 of the internationally agreed development goals.

The danger of a reduction in official development assistance, the absence of flexible global financial mechanisms, and the unpredictability of resources provided to recipient countries during the crisis have led to a drastic decrease of the effectiveness of development measures taken by the Governments of developing and middle-income countries. In that context, we believe it necessary to continue and expand assistance to developing and middle-income countries because it is precisely those countries that can become a driving force for future economic and social progress.

Belarus recognizes its responsibility to the international community in terms of development and makes significant contributions towards the

achievement of the MDGs. The Republic of Belarus has made significant progress at home in a range of areas thanks to the targeted State support of health care, education, agriculture, energy and other sectors of the economy. Furthermore, we believe that an impetus to development efforts could be provided by the United Nations system and other international structures in creating mechanisms to improve access to new technologies and new and renewable sources of energies for developing countries and those with economies in transition.

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1), Member States expressed serious concern about the negative impact of transnational organized crime, one of the manifestations of which is the traffic in persons. World leaders also recognized that such traffic still poses a serious threat to humankind and requires a concerted international response. A few days ago, the Third Committee adopted by consensus a draft resolution on improving the coordination of efforts against the traffic in persons that will enhance Member States' efforts to bring a swift end to that contemporary form of slavery.

As a consequence of decisions taken at the 2005 Summit, today we are closer than ever to drafting a comprehensive United Nations plan of action to combat the traffic in persons that will become an effective mechanism to pool the efforts of the international community to eradicate that social ill. The draft resolution strengthens that idea, underlining the importance of having transparent and open consultations on the comprehensive plan of action and bearing in mind the needs of all interested parties and the opinions of all Member States.

For the first time in recent years, the work of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly led to the adoption of a substantive resolution at the sixty-third session. The Belarus delegation commends the excellent outcome of the negotiations and their co-chairs, Norway and Ecuador. We also note the flexibility and good will of the delegations of the Non-Aligned Movement, the European Union and the permanent members of the Security Council, which had a direct and positive influence on the outcome of the negotiation process.

Belarus believes that three key elements are fundamental to the future success of the process of

General Assembly revitalization. First, we need to strengthen the practice of holding General Assembly thematic debates on topical issues on the international agenda, follow up on their development in open-ended working groups, and adopt relevant resolutions. Secondly, we need to increase public awareness of the work of the General Assembly, including through the most up-to-date media outlets and new technology. Thirdly, we need to implement the provisions of all previous resolutions on revitalizing the work of the General Assembly.

In the kaleidoscope of United Nations reform, most attention is paid to Security Council reform. In that regard, we call on Member States to accelerate the search for a compromise solution to expanding the Council's composition and improving the effectiveness of its work.

Belarus pays particular attention to the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. We are convinced that expanding the membership of the Committee will help both to strengthen its scientific capacity and to increase its authority. We are particularly concerned by the lack of decisiveness on Committee membership and its potential negative impact on the quality of the Committee's work. In that regard, Belarus welcomes the General Assembly's intention to consider bringing new members onto the Committee by the end of the sixty-fourth session. We note the timeliness of the Secretariat's proposal on providing financial resources necessary to the Committee's work, and call upon delegations to support those proposals in the framework of the draft budget discussions in the Fifth Committee.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The United Nations has a crucial role to play in the follow-up of its major conferences and summits. That role is of particular relevance given the current international context characterized by the interconnection of multiple crises, among which we underscore the serious financial and economic crisis, one of the most serious obstacles to the development of the nations of the South.

In the current state of affairs, it is clear that the authority of this world forum derives, among other things, from the fact that its representative nature and legitimacy cannot be replaced by exclusive clubs of countries seeking to manipulate the international

decision-making process in economic and financial matters. Today more than ever, the voices of all countries, especially the smallest and poorest, must be duly heeded and addressed. That is why Cuba supports the holding of a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly next year as a follow-up to the commitments made 10 years ago in the Millennium Declaration and, in particular, those that address development.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that we agreed at that time, together with other goals that are no less important in the area of development and that have been established in the outcome documents of the major summits and conferences that preceded that historic event, must be the centre of our analysis in 2010. That occasion should not only reaffirm documents and reiterate agreed language; it should also allow for an in-depth analysis of the root causes of the persistence of poverty and underdevelopment. It should also serve as an opportunity to propose concrete measures and viable alternative for eradicating poverty.

2010 should also see a review of the commitments made regarding sustainable development of the small island developing States. Cuba is one such State and will participate actively in that process, which should focus on an objective analysis of the targets agreed upon at the historic conferences of Barbados and Mauritius.

Cuba reaffirms the importance of redoubling efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. The 2010 assessment of progress made towards achieving the MDGs will be a key moment for consideration of those topics.

Prior to that meeting, we will have several opportunities to carry out an in-depth analysis of the measures necessary to overcome the remaining obstacles and the new challenges to the achievement of the MDGs. Those opportunities include the 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the results of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, to be carried out during the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in March of 2010. There will also be the annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council, dedicated to implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Climate change has recently captured the attention of the entire world, as the Copenhagen summit draws closer. What is worrisome, however, is although there is full awareness of the serious danger that climate change represents for humanity, the negotiations leading up to Copenhagen have not been able to make as much progress as we had hoped and as was needed.

We have been denouncing the cause of that stagnation for quite some time, and that is the lack of firm political will on the part of the developed countries when it comes to committing to reducing their emissions to a level that is proportional to their historical and current responsibilities and in keeping with the parameters suggested by scientific evaluations. Those countries are also reluctant to contribute the resources and technologies necessary to enable developing countries to tackle the phenomenon of climate change.

Unfortunately, everything seems to point to the fact that the Copenhagen conference will not attain the results that the majority hoped for. It seems that once again the adoption of the concrete and binding commitments that we are calling for will be postponed. How long will we have to wait while the future of all of all humanity is in danger?

The manner in which we confront climate change today will have a direct effect on the development prospects for a great portion of humanity. The achievement of a fair and balanced agreement on climate change is still possible if we approach the process of negotiations with a new political attitude. The battle against climate change can and must be won. Let us not wait until it is too late.

Mr. Gutiérrez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): On 24 October we commemorated the sixty-fourth anniversary of the entry into force of the Charter of the United Nations. During that 64 years Peru has actively participated in the work of the Organization with the same conviction: that multilateralism is the most propitious road for building a better world. Thus we welcome with great satisfaction the new momentum that States are giving multilateralism as an area for political dialogue and cooperation with which the challenges of the twenty-first century can be tackled.

One of the most meaningful achievements of the United Nations in that context was the Millennium Summit, which in 2000 adopted the Millennium

Declaration (resolution 55/2). That document has a special historical value that recognizes the collective responsibility of Governments to work for equality and equity and to ensure that the benefits of globalization will be shared equally. The Summit established eight goals to be met by 2015, which brought together the commitments undertaken by the United Nations during the last decade of the twentieth century.

Since the start the State of Peru has taken those eight goals — seven of which have established timetables — on board as the guiding axis of its social policy in fighting poverty and promoting inclusion. Today we are beginning to see the results of that, as was confirmed on 15 October 2009 by the United Nations Development Programme in its 2008 report on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The report confirms the progress made by Peru in reducing poverty levels from 54.4 per cent in 1991 to 36 per cent in 2008 and in reducing the level of extreme poverty from 23 per cent to 12.6 per cent over the same period. Thus the goal of reducing by half the number of individuals whose incomes are below the extreme poverty line is about to be achieved in Peru.

In the area of education, we have almost achieved universal primary education in Peru. The illiteracy rate has been reduced from 18.1 per cent in 1991 to 6 per cent in the year 2008.

In the area of basic services, the homes with potable water increased from 49 per cent in 1991 to an estimated 80 per cent in 2009. Meanwhile, the homes with electricity increased from 46 per cent to 80 per cent during the same period.

With regard to health, overall malnutrition has gone from 10 per cent in 2004 to 5 per cent in 2008. Chronic child malnutrition has dropped from 25.4 per cent to 21.9 per cent during the same period. Mortality for children less than five years of age has also been reduced by 68 per cent, which means that we will comply with this goal eight years before the deadline.

It is important to underscore, however, that there are many illnesses that were not explicitly included in the Millennium Development Goals but that seriously affect countries such as Peru. They include non-transmittable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, hypertension, chronic respiratory illnesses and diabetes. We must also highlight the

deaths and injuries that result from traffic accidents. All of this confirms that there is an urgent need to evaluate the advisability of promoting the Millennium Development Goals Plus, which have as their principal axis the fight against non-transmittable diseases and injuries.

My Government is committed to continue to allocate the greatest possible resources to fighting not just the consequences of underdevelopment but its complex causes. In the framework of the current economic and financial crisis, it is urgent that we reaffirm the commitments taken on in the Millennium Goals, as the various areas they address are essential to improving the well-being of developing countries.

In that context, we wish to reiterate our concern about the alarming sums that are allocated around the world to acquiring weapons, amounts that increases steadily every year in the midst of one of the most serious global economic recessions. The increase in military expenditures has a direct impact on our countries' capacity to fight hunger and poverty and attain the Millennium Development Goals. Therefore we believe that it is essential to strengthen the direct link between disarmament and development.

The crisis also causes problems in terms of mobilizing resources for global initiatives to fight climate change. Peru is among the countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change without being among its principal producers. The great efforts that my country must undertake in allocating resources to adaptation will reduce our capacity to address the other needs of our population and, consequently, to continue working effectively towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, especially the fight against poverty.

With that in mind, the Copenhagen conference in December should face the challenge of financing measures to adapt to climate change and of mitigating its effects. Peru has presented specific proposals in that area that we hope can be considered at the conference. We also wish to note that the illicit production of coca leaves is one of the greatest factors in the depredation of nature. The felling and burning of forests in order to increase illegal farming causes soil erosion and has led to the deforestation of more than 2.5 million hectares of the Amazon forest, making this phenomenon one of the principal contributors to global warming.

We have stated in the General Assembly that it is urgent that we make the fight against drug trafficking a centrepiece of the international agenda and of the cooperation agenda of developed countries, under the principle of shared but differentiated responsibility.

We have taken note of the report of the Secretary-General on climate change and its possible security implications (A/64/350). It contains elements that we will study with the necessary care.

In this crisis scenario it is necessary to revitalize the United Nations system for development. We must take advantage of the unique role that the Organization plays as an inclusive forum for promoting a better understanding of the social and economic effects of the crisis and formulating appropriate responses for overcoming the challenges that we now face.

Along these lines, we are looking to the high-level meeting that the General Assembly has decided to hold in 2010, at the beginning of its sixty-fifth session, with heads of State and Government participating, at which there will be a review of the progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and in which we will be participating with great interest at the highest possible level.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland): I would like to touch on two issues under agenda item 114, first on armed violence and development, and then on the high-level event of September 2010.

I shall first speak as chair of the Core Group leading the implementation of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. The Core Group is comprised of Brazil, Colombia, Finland, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Spain, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

The Core Group welcomes the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General under review (A/64/228). The report was published pursuant to resolution 63/23, which was adopted by consensus during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General on this substantive work.

The Core Group is very pleased with the report's detailed analysis of the relationship between armed violence and development and its discussion on the human, social and economic costs related to armed violence. The report acknowledges that armed violence

constitutes not only a humanitarian challenge but also an obstacle to development and, ultimately, to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

We believe that the report contains solid elements that will help advance the agenda on armed violence and development. In particular, it highlights the main challenges ahead while providing the international community with a set of concrete and targeted measures. The report also highlights the importance of strengthening national and local capacities with a view to preventing and reducing armed violence. In addition, it values the essential contribution made by multilateral and bilateral agencies in supporting the efforts of Governments to combat armed violence.

Following on recommendation (h) in the report, which invites Member States to build a greater awareness of the negative impact of armed violence on development, the Core Group would like to initiate an open and transparent process with a view to formulating the core elements of a possible resolution during the current session. This open-ended process intends to allow a broad and inclusive debate on the substance of the report and on the recommendations it makes, as well as on the ways and means to foster greater international action. This approach will be particularly important in view of the high-level plenary meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly in September 2010.

Our open-ended process will come with a series of events on several aspects covered in the report in order to make Member States aware of the importance of reducing armed violence as a means of enabling development and ultimately the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. This series of events starts at 1.15 p.m. today with a side event to be held in Conference Room 4. Furthermore, the Core Group believes that enhancing development would be one of the key contributing factors to the prevention and reduction of armed violence. It is our hope that Member States will make full use of this forum to explore the ways and means to ensure people-centred development and hence to reduce the motive to resort to armed violence.

To conclude, on behalf of the Core Group, I would like to encourage all Member States to participate actively in the discussions to come. I hereby encourage those Member States that have not yet done

so to subscribe to the Geneva Declaration and its principles.

(spoke in French)

On behalf of Switzerland, I would now like to speak about the high-level meeting of the General Assembly that will take place next year.

Ten years after the Millennium Declaration and five years after the 2005 Summit — two events that provided important blueprints for addressing key challenges and strengthening the ability of the United Nations to deliver on its mandates — leaders will again convene in September 2010 at the opening of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Since those two historic events, the international context has changed, presenting new challenges and opportunities. The recent food, economic and financial crisis as well as global climate change have highlighted new aspects of insecurity, vulnerability and poverty. These global challenges have also strongly emphasized the characteristic interdependence of our world, where today issues that concern us are more strongly interlinked than ever and cannot be dealt with in isolation.

Development is no exception. For our leaders to be in a position to take stock next year of the current challenges directly affecting development and to discuss specific action to address them, they will have to take into account the multiple correlations between, for example, between climate change and development, between peace and security and development, or between the global economy and development. In our view, that holistic approach is critical to enabling the 2010 summit to reflect the broad context in which development challenges are embedded.

Since the year 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been shown to be a powerful vector for political action, and these time-bound targets, *inter alia*, will continue to inspire our common efforts for development. In 2008, in the framework of the High-level Event on the MDGs in 2008, our leaders reviewed at length the progress made, took stock of remaining gaps in the global effort to achieve the established goals and identified concrete action needed on a global scale to meet them. The 2010 summit should therefore build on that meeting, as well as on others, and avoid reiterating debates and the conclusions already reached in 2008.

Next fall, our leaders should also assess the status of the global partnership for development called for by the Millennium Declaration. For a true and effective partnership, we need stronger international institutions. In this regard, we cannot overemphasize the central role of the United Nations or the need for reforms essential to make the United Nations a more efficient, effective and coherent platform for carrying out the international effort for peace, security and development.

The growing interdependence of nations and the increasing interconnection of global threats are a challenge to all countries, all institutions and the global governance system as a whole. We are convinced that the 2010 summit is an opportunity to demonstrate that the United Nations is capable of taking on those complex issues. It is also a key moment to reaffirm that the United Nations remains the only universal and legitimate platform for dealing with and collecting in one forum the challenges whose interconnections are evident on a planetary scale, affecting development and the global context in which we all live.

Ms. Ross (United States of America): The United States welcomes the important report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel (A/64/176). We are gratified to note that the United Nations system is taking action to institutionalize implementation of this important pillar of the Organization's response to sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel. The victims of such abuse are beginning to receive the assistance they need to address the very real needs arising out of these reprehensible acts.

We appreciate the frankness on how the Strategy is being implemented in practice by humanitarian and peacekeeping missions that are operating in often difficult circumstances. We welcome the recognition that, while such misconduct is the exception, as it should be, it is committed by all categories of personnel and that therefore measures to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse must be taken throughout the United Nations system and should include clear standards of conduct for contractors and other partners.

We note that the report indicates varying levels of coordination among United Nations agencies at the country level on implementing measures to assist victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. The work already being done to use existing legal, medical and other community programmes is very useful.

We would also like to call attention to other practical steps being taken to strengthen implementation of the Strategy. For example, the report notes that the United Nations Development Group has approved revised job descriptions for managers that include responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Strategy. That is exactly the kind of measure that ensures that busy leaders see this as a priority. Another such example is the inclusion of clauses in contracts that would establish for such contractors appropriate standards of conduct. The United States believes that there is a clear need for continuing reporting on the implementation of this Strategy. In this regard, we look forward to exploring what additional measures might be needed to strengthen and institutionalize application of the Strategy.

We wish to express both our appreciation of the work that has already been done and our recognition of the enormous challenges ahead. The United States reiterates its support for the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy and calls on all Member States to strengthen their resolve to change the culture of impunity that allows such reprehensible acts to take place.

Turning to the issue of climate change and its possible security implications, the United States was pleased to join the list of sponsors of General Assembly resolution 63/281, on climate change and its possible security implications, of June 2009 and to support its original proponents, namely the Pacific small island developing States. We also welcomed the opportunity to provide views on the security implications of climate change, as requested in the resolution.

We were encouraged by the Assembly's ability to achieve broad consensus on a resolution concerning the urgent issue of climate change, particularly in the crucial remaining weeks leading to the fifteenth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen. The Secretary-General's thoughtful report

on the security implications of climate change (A/64/350) provides a valuable resource for Parties.

When President Obama addressed the General Assembly in September, he underscored the seriousness of the challenges we face. At that time he said, "we must recognize that in the twenty-first century there will be no peace unless we take responsibility for the preservation of our planet" (see A/64/PV.3).

The danger posed by climate change cannot be denied. Our responsibility to meet it must not be deferred. If we continue down our current course, every member of this Assembly will see irreversible changes within their borders. Our efforts to end conflicts will be eclipsed by wars over refugees and resources. Development will be devastated by drought and famine. Land that human beings have lived on for millennia will disappear. Future generations will look back and wonder why we refused to act, why we failed to pass on an environment that was worthy of our inheritance.

The United States has made advancing the climate change agenda one of our top priorities at the United Nations. Today's discussion reinforces our collective recognition that global climate change requires an urgent response and the widest possible cooperation by all countries. The United States reaffirms its commitment to leadership in this critical global endeavour.

Mr. Normandin (Canada): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel (A/64/176).

Since the Strategy's adoption two years ago, progress on its implementation has been slow. However, significant inroads have been made towards ensuring that in the future, provision of assistance and support to victims will be possible. The report identifies a number of key actions and initiatives that have been undertaken since adoption, such as the best practice series of the Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The report also describes the challenges facing the Strategy's

implementation, which include the lack of community-based reporting and complaints mechanisms to deal with such cases. With an issue as sensitive and personal as sexual exploitation and abuse, it is easy to understand that victims may find it difficult to come forward and report on what they have endured; the issue of under-reporting is all too familiar in these circumstances.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand believe it is essential that the United Nations system continue its work to implement the Strategy, and that this work be undertaken in a comprehensive, system-wide manner.

In-country mechanisms to facilitate access for victims to needed services will not be established, and overall protection from sexual exploitation and abuse will not be achieved, without the whole United Nations system — humanitarian, development and peacekeeping personnel — being on board and working together.

It is crucial that work on this Strategy continue so that victims are offered the assistance they need and deserve. Canada, Australia and New Zealand strongly endorse continued implementation of the Strategy and support the next steps outlined in the Secretary-General's report.

Speaking now in my national capacity, let me briefly address the Secretary-General's report on climate change and its possible security implications (A/64/350), also under agenda item 114.

Canada once again wishes to congratulate the Pacific small island developing States for their leadership in bringing the issue of security and climate change to the forefront of our work at the United Nations. The existential threat facing the Pacific small islands, in particular, gives this important issue a very real, urgent and human dimension.

The global challenge of climate change requires a global response. Internationally, Canada is working towards an ambitious post-2012 global climate change agreement at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen in early December.

Canada welcomed the adoption of resolution 63/281, on climate change and its possible security implications, in June 2009, and we welcome the calls for relevant United Nations bodies to intensify their

efforts in considering the possible security implications of climate change.

(spoke in French)

The Secretary-General's comprehensive report will facilitate the exchange among Member States of diverse views on this important issue and will help put our work in context.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Pacific small island developing States for their leadership on this issue.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) *(spoke in Spanish)*: In 2007, the President of the General Assembly asked me to coordinate the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group tasked with drafting a strategy on assistance and support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel. Accordingly, today, Costa Rica wishes to refer specifically to that topic.

We welcome the measures that have been adopted and the progress that has been reported in the Secretary-General's report on implementation of the United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel (A/64/176). When the Open-ended Working Group's work came to an end, I said that it marked a great step forward in meeting the needs of victims, which should be a great source of satisfaction to the United Nations and to all of us who had participated in drafting the Strategy.

While the nature and scope of the subject seemed to raise difficult obstacles to overcome, agreement was possible thanks to the commitment of all States Members of the Organization to help the victims. It was particularly important to separate the assistance strategy from the policy of zero tolerance, focusing solely on the human dimension of assistance and support for victims.

Despite the progress that has already been made, much remains to be done to attain a truly broad focus for assistance for victims based on the principles of comprehensive protection, solidarity and responsibility. The report tells us that the victims of those abuses are now beginning to receive basic assistance and support in a timely manner, in keeping with their specific needs.

Through structures of the United Nations system, medical, legal, psychological and social support is already being provided, along with urgent support in the areas of housing, food and clothing. The Strategy is an integral part of the measures adopted by the United Nations system to prevent and address sexual abuse and exploitation by United Nations staff and associated personnel.

Here, we view favourably the progress being made in the implementation of the Strategy by humanitarian, development and peacekeeping personnel. We support that comprehensive approach and we look forward to its consolidation throughout the system. We warmly welcome the measures and instruments that are being implemented to enhance the Strategy's implementation, through the Task Force co-chaired by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Field Support, and we call for their strengthening.

In conclusion, Costa Rica recognizes the work that has been done and draws attention to the remaining challenges. Once again, we call on all United Nations personnel to conduct themselves at the highest level of ethical standards.

Mr. Midekssa (Ethiopia): My delegation is grateful for this opportunity to make some remarks on agenda item 114, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit". My delegation would also like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report under that agenda item, entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications" (A/64/350).

As is reflected in the Secretary-General's report, many Member States, in their submissions, recognize that the possible security implications of climate change need to be examined in the context of pre-existing social, economic and environmental threats, which are key factors in the security of individuals, communities and States. Those assessments are all captured and adequately reflected in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2).

The persistence of poverty, hunger and disease, the rapid growth of informal urban settlements, inadequate infrastructure and the growing scarcity of land, water and other resources are challenges that must be effectively addressed to ease the security implications of climate change.

In short, threats can be reduced through sustainable development, including legitimate and effective governance and institutions, as well as peaceful dispute resolution. In addition, it has now become apparent that a significant slowdown of growth caused by climate change could pose a serious security threat to developing countries, by worsening poverty and desperation. Economic growth should therefore be fostered so as to strengthen resilience, maintain political stability and promote international cooperation in addressing the various challenges of underprivileged populations. This fact is clearly reflected in the discussion in the Secretary-General's report of the five channels through which climate change could affect security, in which the channel showing the relationship between development and peace is empirically substantiated. Maintaining global peace and stability requires keeping the momentum of development going.

It is in light of this evidence that the emphasis on preventing the adverse effects of climate change should be consistent with the efforts of the United Nations to move from a tradition of reaction to one of prevention and with its emphasis on sustainable development as a crucial contributor to conflict prevention. Advancing sustainable development, building resilience to physical and economic shocks, and strengthening institutions are vital to confronting the impact of climate change and promoting peace and security.

The impact of climate change on human well-being can be illustrated in various ways. For instance, according to the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, cereal productivity is expected to decrease in Africa and southern Asia due to climate change. In some African countries, yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50 per cent by 2020; food security is likely to suffer and the risk of hunger to increase. Africa is also often seen as a continent where climate change could potentially intensify or trigger conflict. Among the reasons given are the continent's reliance on climate-dependent sectors, recent ethnic and political conflict, and fragile States.

Speaking of Africa, we firmly believe that in order to mitigate the impact of climate change on human well-being, the international community should take serious measures to control greenhouse-gas emissions. It is for this reason that we all expect a climate change deal to be sealed in Copenhagen.

Africa, for its part, will for the first time in history field a single negotiating team, chaired by Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, empowered to negotiate on behalf of all the States members of the African Union. We believe more important than the challenges will be the opportunities opened up by this decision. More than 50 countries, more than one fourth of the States Members of the United Nations, will speak with one voice. That should make the negotiations much more manageable than would have been the case in the absence of such a decision. Africa's interests and position will not be muffled, as has usually been the case, and the problems we discuss here today will definitely surface at the highest level in Copenhagen.

My delegation has also learned from the report that climate change has the potential to affect international relations among countries through possible conflicts of interest over the use of transboundary water or other resources that may become increasingly scarce as a result of climate change. But we believe that, by fostering cooperation among States and with the concrete support of the international community, such concerns can be effectively remedied.

My delegation also believes that the strategy of adaptation requires empowering people, building their resilience, securing their livelihoods, and putting in place or strengthening the physical infrastructure needed to protect against extreme weather events, as well as the institutions and systems needed to cope with the consequences of such events. The international community must therefore provide stronger support for climate-change adaptation in developing countries, including through investments in capacity-building at all levels.

Finally, any failure to effectively implement the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals will undoubtedly have even worse effects than shattering economies; it could rekindle dormant conflicts and provoke new ones, thereby precipitating poor countries into total disaster. It is therefore imperative for the international community to redouble its efforts to guarantee the sustainable and equitable development of all countries, notably by ensuring that developed countries meet their international commitments in development assistance. This is all the more imperative in the midst of the current global economic difficulties,

which have threatened to set back recent development progress in many developing countries.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): New Zealand thanks the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the possible security implications of climate change (A/64/350), which results from a specific request in resolution 63/281 — a historic resolution that New Zealand was proud to co-sponsor, along with 100 other Member States.

This report comes at a time when the Asia-Pacific region has been severely hit by natural disasters, with devastating results for many communities, families and livelihoods. These recent tragedies have illustrated the challenges faced by small island developing States in particular, given their small size and specific vulnerabilities, in responding to natural disasters, whether climatic or otherwise. Along with other development partners, New Zealand continues to provide support to Pacific island countries in addressing those challenges.

New Zealand made detailed submissions in respect to the Secretary-General's report, which was based on the views of Member States and relevant regional and international organizations. We therefore do not intend to comment in detail on this occasion, but there are some key points that should be highlighted.

We are pleased to see the reference to the Copenhagen summit and look forward to engaging in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process. In particular, we support the report's call for a Copenhagen outcome that is "science-based, comprehensive, balanced and equitable and fair" (A/64/350, *para. 26*).

New Zealand's immediate climate change objective is to achieve effective and comprehensive global mitigation action to reduce emissions and to implement effective adaptation measures. Our aim in this context is to build confident, resilient and viable communities and to lessen the impact of climate change as a risk multiplier, as identified both in New Zealand's submission and the Secretary-General's report.

For those reasons, we are particularly interested in chapter IX, "The way forward". The report recommends action by the international community, including taking bold steps on climate change and providing stronger support for climate change

adaptation in developing countries. It will be important that this adaptation be prioritized to the most vulnerable, including those in the Pacific.

The report recognizes that such security threats can be effectively managed through sustainable development measures, but that requires ongoing and relevant research. New Zealand is committed to working with its Pacific partners to achieve this through a number of bilateral, regional and multilateral initiatives. Above all, the report makes clear that the nature and full extent of the security implications of climate change are still largely untested, so it is important that the way forward be guided by robust empirical evidence, and we agree with that view.

It has been said that the iconic image of climate change has been the polar bear on a melting ice floe, but in human terms the more compelling image should be the citizen of an island State that could over time become devoid of agriculture, diminished in infrastructure, reduced in population and, ultimately, uninhabitable. Whole populations would be on the move and already vulnerable communities would be further threatened. Security and other issues would abound. These issues must be addressed before it is too late. And that is the challenge for all of us — for the United Nations and all of its Member States.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): At the outset allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to thank the President for convening this meeting. My delegation also would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on climate change and its possible security implications, contained in document A/64/350. My delegation welcomes the report and acknowledges the manner in which some of the new and emerging security threats associated with climate change are being addressed.

Solomon Islands associate this statement with the statement delivered by Mr. Stuart Beck, Permanent Representative of Palau, on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS). My delegation would like to contribute to the debate in our national capacity.

It is clear from the report that there are security implications related to climate change that require the collective cooperation of the international community in addressing identified new and emerging climate-related challenges. The report identifies five elements that have climate change-related security implications on vulnerable populations globally.

First is the vulnerability of populations to climate change-related threats to their food, water, health and territorial security and the entire livelihood of human societies, especially those that are ill equipped to effectively invest in the implementation of national adaptation and mitigation activities. Second are threats to reverse current development processes. Third are national capacities to address climate change-related migration and displacement of populations, and conflicts over shared resources such as water sources. Fourthly, the report confirms the threat of statelessness among SIDS and implications for human rights, security and sovereignty. Fifthly, there is concern that international conflict could emerge over shared or undemarcated international resources.

The report also identifies possible threat minimizers to lower climate change-related insecurity. On this issue, we reiterate our call for a mitigation and adaptation package that provides for the long-term stabilization of atmospheric greenhouse-gas concentrations.

In this connection, we wish to take a piece from the Declaration of the Alliance of Small Island States agreed to by all SIDS at the September summit, and that is to adopt a package of mitigation activities beyond 2012 that, first, provides long-term stabilization of atmospheric greenhouse-gas concentrations well below 350 parts per million carbon dioxide-equivalent levels; secondly, ensures that the global average surface temperature increases are limited to well below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels; thirdly, provides for global greenhouse-gas emissions to peak by 2015 and to decline thereafter; fourthly, reduces global greenhouse-gas emissions by more than 85 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050; and fifthly, calls on countries listed in Annex I to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to reduce their collective greenhouse-gas emissions by more than 45 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020 and by more than 95 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050, given their historical responsibility.

With respect to threat minimizers, democratic good governance and strong local and national institutions are needed, as stated in the report. However, every effort must be made to improve the economic and trade conditions of these countries to enable them to effectively invest in the sustainable functioning of such institutions in order to address and

contain climate change threats through mitigation and adaptation programmes at the national level.

As to international cooperation, it is vitally important to ensure that international commitments under the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, including the Millennium Development Goals, are fulfilled to provide an enabling process for the vulnerable countries to address the severe security implications of climate change. The lack of commitment has pushed SIDS to submit resolutions recognizing the human dimension of climate change, which, as our Charter affirms, is people-centred as far as sustainable development is concerned.

The same can be said of current climate change negotiations. At this defining moment, when leadership is required, it is not available. My delegation registers its deep concerns over public statements from some quarters that we should lower our collective expectation of achieving a legally binding agreement in Copenhagen. We remain positive that a legally binding agreement is possible in Copenhagen, but it requires political will to present ambitious targets and adequate resources. We know there is sufficient technology available to stabilize our climate. As my delegation stated in Barcelona, the victims of the lack of action will come from the countries of the southern hemisphere, the vulnerable countries, the SIDS and the least developed countries, and not from the Annex I countries.

We therefore call for action and we call for action now. We keep saying this; we keep having summits on climate change; and yet we have not lived up to what we have said. We make this plea on behalf of those who are living on the edge of climate change and would like to say that those on the front line will continue to suffer on a daily basis as we continue to postpone action that is required and is now demanded of us.

Allow me to close by once again thanking the Secretary-General for his report. We also call on the Security Council to put this matter on its agenda. Again, I thank all who are present and have participated in and supported this process for their support in discussing this important subject.

Mr. Goledzinowski (Australia): Australia was proud to co-sponsor resolution 63/281 on the link between climate change and security, and we are pleased that the Secretary-General's report (A/64/350)

is being considered today. It is a small but important step forward in addressing this serious global challenge.

We are now all deeply aware that climate change has the potential to exacerbate situations that are already fragile and to increase pressures on areas that are already vulnerable. This report, like the debate that preceded it, for which we have to remember to thank the Pacific small island developing States, contributes significantly to improving our awareness of the potential implications.

Australia sees effective global and national efforts to mitigate against and adapt to climate change as the best way to minimize the impacts of climate change and, in turn, any security-related consequences. We welcome the report's emphasis on prevention as the best remedy.

Australia is playing its full and fair part in helping to shape a global climate change solution. Some States will be better placed than others to cope with the impacts of climate change. Low-lying island States, as we have been reminded today, are particularly vulnerable. The threats posed by sea-level rise and increases in extreme weather events will have a particular impact on Australia's Pacific and Indian Ocean island neighbours. As I said when the resolution was adopted, these States have done the least to cause climate change, but will be the first to feel its effects.

As the report details, these impacts will likely threaten food and water security and vital infrastructure and community facilities, and be felt in their economies through reduced income from agricultural, tourism and fisheries.

Building resilience to climate impacts is therefore vital to securing livelihoods and helping people have the choice to remain in their homes, where that is possible. That is why Australia is contributing to adaptation and mitigation activities. We have committed some \$150 million under the International Climate Change Adaptation Initiative to meet high-priority adaptation needs. We are also contributing to the Least Developed Countries Fund under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to support the identification and implementation of urgent adaptation activities.

The international community must remain alert to the possible direct and indirect security implications of

climate change. As we here in the General Assembly should remember, we are the authentic voice of the international community. In adopting resolution 63/281 and in receiving this report, we have begun to live up to that obligation.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 57/32 of 19 November 2002, I now call on the Permanent Observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mrs. Filip (Inter-Parliamentary Union): I am pleased to address the General Assembly at this joint debate on the strengthening of the United Nations system and the follow-up to the Millennium Summit. I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Theo-Ben Gurirab, Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia and former President of the General Assembly.

Over the past several years, the IPU and the United Nations have been building a strategic partnership in the pursuit of world peace, development, democracy and human rights. Looking back, I think we can agree that important progress has been made, as the Assembly itself has confirmed through successive resolutions.

Two years ago, in the fall of 2007, the General Assembly received an IPU policy paper on the nature of the relationship between the United Nations and the world's parliaments. Essentially, we view this as a partnership that needs to be firmly rooted in the activities that parliaments carry out at home. The partnership includes action by parliaments in the light of their legislative and budgetary functions, as well as work by parliaments to contribute to and monitor international negotiations and debates at the United Nations and to ensure national compliance with international norms and the rule of law. It also involves scrutinizing the activities of the United Nations and contributing to its deliberations.

The IPU is convinced that members of parliament can play an important part in building national ownership and political support for international action. In the view of the IPU, which is shared by many United Nations Member States, the United Nations stands to gain considerably by making sure that parliaments and their members have a full and undistorted understanding of what is done here at the United Nations.

This is the purpose of the Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, which the Assembly has endorsed as a joint United Nations-IPU event and the outcome report of which is circulated to parliaments and United Nations Member States. This year's Hearing takes place later this week. It will focus on the international response to the global economic crisis. It will bring together legislators from around the world to interact with the Assembly and the broader United Nations community, and we encourage permanent missions to actively participate.

Like the President of the Assembly and Member States, we are also working hard to implement the recommendations of resolution 63/24, which was adopted by consensus exactly one year ago. I would like to refer very briefly to just a few of its elements.

First, the General Assembly invited the Peacebuilding Commission to work with the IPU in engaging national parliaments in the countries under consideration by the Commission in efforts to promote democratic governance, national dialogue and reconciliation. To that end, we have expanded programmes in Burundi and Sierra Leone in support of an inclusive political process. More recently, we have begun consultations with the Peacebuilding Commission on the type of capacity-building support that could be provided to the Parliament of the Central African Republic.

Secondly, the IPU has been working closely with the Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council to provide a robust parliamentary contribution to the Forum and the broader development cooperation agenda. We have begun a series of case studies in Africa on how parliaments relate to the aid effectiveness agenda, and we are substantively involved in the preparations for the second Forum session next year.

Thirdly, that resolution encouraged the IPU to strengthen its contribution to the Human Rights Council, particularly as it relates to the Universal Periodic Review of the fulfilment of human rights obligations and commitments by Member States. A recent IPU meeting on the Universal Periodic Review revealed enormous interest among parliaments in this process, in particular in terms of debating the draft national report in parliament before it becomes final and receiving the outcome of the Universal Periodic

Review for further consideration. IPU will seek to follow up on these recommendations.

Through these and other efforts in support of United Nations activities, we are trying to help bridge the gap between national commitments and national response, and we hope that the IPU and its member parliaments can hereby make a meaningful contribution to the strengthening of the United Nations.

Before I conclude, I would like to say a brief word on the work ahead. Today and tomorrow, the IPU President is chairing a meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments. We have a full agenda before us and, as was the case during the previous parliamentary summits in 2000 and 2005, a significant part of the speakers' reflections will focus on the parliamentary dimension of the work of the United Nations. We will be exploring options to further consolidate the institutional relationship between the United Nations system and the IPU.

We cannot do this alone. It will require substantive consultations at various levels among the parliamentary leaders themselves, in capitals between the legislative and executive branches of Government, and here at United Nations Headquarters with permanent representatives and United Nations officials. We look forward to working closely with all members as we undertake this exciting journey. In this process we should all keep in mind that we share the common objective of strengthening the United Nations as the cornerstone of multilateral cooperation, consolidating the rule of law in international relations and delivering on the legitimate aspirations of our peoples to peace, freedom and prosperity.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 48, 114, 120 and 121.

Agenda item 43

Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

Note by the Secretary-General (A/64/303)

Draft resolution (A/64/L.17)

The Acting President: In connection with agenda item 43, the Assembly has before it a note by the

Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, circulated in document A/64/303.

I give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Greece to introduce draft resolution A/64/L.17

Mr. Mitsialis (Greece): It is with great honour and pleasure that I present to the General Assembly, under agenda item 43, a draft resolution on the return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin, contained in document A/64/L.17.

In recent years, the international community has become increasingly sensitive to this issue and has demonstrated its willingness to facilitate the return or restitution of cultural property illicitly removed from its countries of origin. Such removal, especially when it results from illicit trade, is against all the principles that culture stands for.

Culture is the soul of a nation. The illicit removal or destruction of cultural property deprives peoples of their history and tradition. Restitution is the only means to reverse the damage and reinstate a sense of dignity. It is therefore of paramount importance that States Members of the United Nations continue to cooperate actively, both bilaterally and in international forums, in a spirit of mutual understanding and dialogue with a view to resolving any outstanding issues in this respect. Such cooperation also constitutes the most appropriate way to address the adverse effects of major political and other upheavals, including armed conflict, that have provided fertile ground for the loss, destruction, removal or illicit movement of cultural property.

In the draft resolution I have the honour to present today, we have tried to reflect the latest steps and activities that have been undertaken by the international community, especially in the framework of UNESCO, which has a unique responsibility as the sole agency with a mandate to safeguard and promote the world's cultural resources at all levels. Equally important in this respect is the effective work and the relevant recommendations of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation.

We are confident that the international community will continue to cooperate towards

increased mobilization and action in order to promote heritage values and to safeguard, return and restitute cultural property to the countries of origin. Public awareness is once more a crucial part of this endeavour, which also involves Governments, civil society, academic and artistic leadership, and, of course, all of us who share a common cultural heritage — the heritage of humankind.

In this context, I should like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General as well to the Director-General of UNESCO for the tireless, constant and meaningful support they have provided on this issue.

Action on the draft resolution will be taken at a later stage. In the meantime, we will consult closely with all interested delegations. We look forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, as in previous years, and with the widest possible sponsorship.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the report submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/64/303 under agenda item 43, “Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin”, and supports draft resolution A/64/L.17, submitted by the delegation of Greece under this agenda item.

Symbolic of the identity of a nation or people, cultural property represents a valuable asset of human civilization. The illicit appropriation of and traffic in cultural property are a sacrilege against history and civilization. While enjoying broad consensus within the international community, the protection of cultural heritage and the promotion of the restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin are also inalienable and fundamental cultural rights of the people of countries of origin, as well as cultural responsibilities incumbent on all Governments.

In recent years, the issue of returning cultural property has received increasing attention from a growing number of countries. China supports countries of origin in seeking the return of cultural property of spiritual and cultural value, and supports the General Assembly’s resolutions on the return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin, and resolution 2008/23 of the Economic and Social Council, entitled “Protection against trafficking in cultural property”. We reiterate the need for the international community to prevent and combat all

aspects of trafficking in cultural property, including the transfer, through auction or other means, of cultural property that was illegally removed from its countries of origin.

Strengthening international cooperation is an effective way to prevent and combat trafficking in cultural property. States should comply in good faith with international legal frameworks and principles relating to this issue, cooperate actively with relevant United Nations bodies and international organizations in joint efforts to combat the smuggling of and trafficking in cultural property, and enhance bilateral and multilateral cooperation in promoting the return of cultural property.

China commends the efforts made in this regard by UNESCO, an important global body engaged in the protection of cultural resources. We support UNESCO’s expansion of its advocacy activities to raise public awareness; to bring to the attention of Governments, civil society, academic institutions, museums and art market operators the harm resulting from such traffic in and transfer of cultural property illegally taken abroad; and to advance bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the interest of the return of cultural property.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the protection of cultural heritage. We have put in place a legal and regulatory system with the Cultural Relics Protection Law at its core. Positive results have been achieved in areas of inventory archiving, security and safeguard-building, market management and publicity campaigning. China is now party to the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property; the Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects; and the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. China took an active part in the drafting of UNESCO’s Declaration of Principles Relating to cultural objects displaced in connection with the Second World War. It has signed bilateral agreements with many countries on the prevention of the illicit appropriation, excavation and entry and exit of cultural objects, and has, on multiple occasions via international cooperation, successfully sought and retrieved such objects that had been illegally transported overseas.

For an extended period beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the western Powers, in a succession of wars of aggression against China, plundered and looted countless Chinese cultural relics, including numerous cultural treasures from Yuan Ming Yuan Summer Palace. Those relics should be returned to China.

China insists on its right to seek the return of cultural relics that have been illegally taken abroad. It opposes auctions of cultural relics illegally taken from China, including treasures from the Yuan Ming Yuan Summer Palace. We believe that such auctions run counter to the underlying spirit of the relevant international treaties and United Nations resolutions. They also represent serious infringements of China's cultural rights and interests.

China will continue to actively participate in UNESCO activities aimed at promoting the return of cultural property to its countries of origin. We shall also seek appropriate solutions in that regard, thereby making our due contribution to the protection of international cultural heritage.

Mr. Chávez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cultural heritage is the inheritance of physical and non-physical property that our ancestors have bequeathed to us in the course of history. That cultural property makes it possible for us to forge an identity in order to know who we are and where we came from, as well as to develop as individuals in our societies. States therefore have the right and obligation to protect their cultural heritage.

Protection cannot be done in an isolated way, as only a portion of cultural heritage is in State hands. That is why we need the cooperation of other stakeholders, such as museums, artistic institutions, art dealers and society as a whole. All of them must work together to prevent the loss, destruction, removal, theft, ransacking and illicit trafficking in, or improper acquisition of, cultural property, including any damage or act of vandalism.

That task, arduous in and of itself, is made even more difficult when it comes to cultural heritage that is not under the jurisdiction of the State of origin. Unfortunately, that situation penalizes countries with fewer resources. It is therefore necessary to develop international mechanisms that promote cooperation and support the efforts made by States to protect their cultural heritage. The best way to do that is to return

illegally gained cultural property to the country of origin. The international community has at its disposal significant norms in this area. It should ensure that they are applied.

For its part, Peru has ratified the main international legal instruments, including the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two protocols, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law's Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects. We have also enacted various bilateral agreements in this connection. We call on States that have not yet done so to adhere to or ratify the various international instruments to which I have referred.

The existence of an international legal framework is essential, but it is not enough. Effectively protecting cultural heritage requires that States fully comply with their international commitments in this field. It also requires technical, financial and judicial cooperation to facilitate return and restitution procedures for cultural property. It is equally necessary for there to be cooperation between the stakeholders involved. It must be underscored that it is they who provide information to the relevant authorities about the property in their possession. In many cases, it is also they who voluntarily return property that came into their possession after having been illegally acquired. That practice of voluntary return should be acknowledged and encouraged.

We are pleased that significant efforts are being made with regard to returning cultural heritage, as indicated in the report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the measures that have been taken to return such property to their countries of origin (see A/64/303). That document, for which we are grateful, is a comprehensive report on the efforts that are being made in this area. I should like to make special mention of the UNESCO database of national cultural heritage laws, which is a very valuable tool for learning about how States regulate and implement internal procedures. It is therefore essential that States that have not yet done so submit information about their cultural heritage laws as soon as possible. States that have already done so should now implement those laws.

However, the report also identifies areas where reinforcement is necessary. In that connection, it is urgent to implement the recommendations made by the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation. Those recommendations were adopted in November 2008, with the active participation of my country. The goals should be to substantially increase the return or restitution of cultural property.

Another area in which strengthening is required is the fight against impunity for those who traffic in cultural property. We should put in place mechanisms for the investigation, control, detention and prosecution of persons associated with the illicit trafficking in cultural property. Their links to other types of organized crime are increasingly close and troubling. In order to put an end to such illegal activity, we must severely punish all those who are guilty of it.

Regional cooperation mechanisms can, and should, play a leading role in the return and restitution of cultural property to the country of origin. We are grateful for the efforts made by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the Andean Community, along with the Peruvian Government, to organize a capacity-building workshop on the illicit trade in cultural property. We urge other States and regional bodies to emulate that positive experience. In that regard, I would like to express our readiness to cooperate in sharing our experiences.

Peru is continuing its efforts to recover cultural property that was illicitly taken from our territory or which has not been returned in a timely manner. Thanks to the assistance and cooperation of various countries, we have been successful in recovering pieces that have incalculable cultural value. Peru is cooperating with other States with equal determination. This year, we were pleased to return to the Iraqi authorities and people three cuneiform clay tablets dating to between the third and first centuries before Christ, which were seized in my country from international traffickers.

By reclaiming its own cultural property and returning seized cultural property to its legitimate owners Peru is not merely meeting its obligations, it is acting in that way because it believes that this is about a moral obligation. The return and restitution of cultural property does not just entail legal,

archaeological and political aspects. It is also, above all, a matter of ethics. The ethical and moral component is especially relevant when it comes to cultural property exported for the purposes of display, restoration or study that has not been returned to the country of origin in a timely manner. We must not condone such situations. Property must be returned immediately to its legitimate owners.

A concrete example in that regard is the efforts being made by Peru to recover the large number of items extracted from Machu Picchu, one the seven wonders of the modern world, that are still housed in the Peabody Museum at Yale University in the United States. We regret that the dialogue to ensure the return of that property has not borne fruit and that it has been necessary to have recourse to the legal route. We believe that justice will determine that we are right. Nevertheless, that does not alter our belief that, before resorting to legal mechanisms, States should redouble their efforts to resolve disputes pertaining to the return and restitution of cultural property by friendly means using negotiation or other complementary methods.

We are certain that we have right on our side. We shall continue to work tirelessly to ensure that our cultural property returns to where it belongs.

Mr. Kuma (Ethiopia): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its profound appreciation to the Secretary-General for his note transmitting the comprehensive report on the agenda item under consideration (A/64/303). My delegation also commends the increased role played by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in combating illegal trafficking in cultural property. We also commend the Intergovernmental Committee for promoting the return of cultural property to its countries of origin.

The issue of the return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin is an area in which international relations are put to the test. Because of their invaluable aesthetic significance and the pivotal role they play in preserving and recording the talents and endurance of humanity, my delegation attaches particular importance to this agenda item. The return of displaced cultural property is a fundamental means of restoring and reconstructing a people's heritage and identity. It also creates dialogue among civilizations in an atmosphere of mutual respect. And it also has to do with the inalienable attribute of sovereignty of every

people by which they should have access to and be able to enjoy the irreplaceable symbols of their heritage. There is strong sentiment today that neither the existence of universal museums nor their multiplication in different sites in the future can substitute for the bond that exists between a cultural object and the societies of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Although Ethiopia has enjoyed a long history of independence, we have suffered from the repeated looting and systematic smuggling of our cultural heritage, dating from early periods to the religious wars of the sixteenth century. The looting of an infinite variety of artefacts and innumerable manuscripts has resulted in an immense depletion of Ethiopia's cultural heritage.

In recent years, a new wind of optimism has appeared on the horizon. After many years of negotiation, Italy has returned the Axum Obelisk to Ethiopia. Given the beginning of a new chapter in our relations with Italy, we would like to take this opportunity once again to thank the Government and people of Italy for that magnanimous act. We believe that others will also now start the process of returning the remaining objects, which include manuscripts, works of art and religious and cultural artefacts.

In this era of globalization, it is important for nations to be able to preserve their historical and cultural identity, while at the same time working together and cooperating to overcome global challenges. Cultural property serves as a link between past, present and future. There is no disagreement that cultural property is a basic element of civilization and national heritage. As various United Nations and African Union resolutions have underlined, many countries of origin attach great importance to the return of cultural property. In certain cases, cultural heritage constitutes the repository of fundamental spiritual and cultural values. The cultural wealth of Ethiopia symbolizes its national pride and its unity in diversity.

In conclusion, Ethiopia strongly believes that cooperation with regard to returning cultural property should be a matter of ethics. Fundamental moral principles and the return of property are directly linked to being human. Cooperation, partnership and good will should be strengthened. The role of organizations engaged in that process should be enhanced by providing the necessary means, resources and

infrastructure. We reiterate that requests for the full return or restitution of cultural property should be respected and complied with as an act of justice and a moral obligation.

Mr. Saripudin (Indonesia): Indonesia attaches great importance to the issue of the return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin. As a country with many archaeological artefacts dating from prehistoric times, Indonesia has taken many measures to preserve its valuable national heritage. Among them is the enactment of Law No. 5 of 1992, regarding the conservation of cultural objects. The Government of Indonesia plans to revise that law so as to incorporate not only the physical and material aspects of culture, such as objects and heritage sites, but also non-physical aspects, such as customs and art.

Indonesia acknowledges the 2005 launching of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) database of national cultural heritage laws, which serves as a reference tool and compendium of good practices. We also acknowledge the UNESCO-World Customs Organization Model Export Certificate for Cultural Objects as a tool to combat illicit trafficking in cultural property. We also commend the efforts of UNESCO to promote the relevant international standard-setting instruments and to take steps to raise public awareness of the relevant restitution and illicit-trafficking issues. In addition, we commend the work of its Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation. We also believe that it is important for States to continue to do their utmost to prevent the illicit appropriation of cultural objects.

Indonesia underlines the fact that draft resolution A/64/L.17 basically concerns the recovery of cultural property that was stolen or obtained in an illicit manner. However, my delegation notes that many legal difficulties are often encountered at the international level when attempting to recover stolen or illicitly exported cultural property to which the 1972 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and the 1995 International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects do not apply.

Indonesia would like to underline the criminal dimension of this issue. As we know, it is the nature of stolen cultural objects to be sent across international borders illegally. Obviously, the international dimension is attractive to sophisticated operators, whose destinations of choice are those nations where they feel they can evade law enforcement or may be able to exploit perceived loopholes in the regulations. Indonesia therefore believes that, in order to prevent and further deter those sophisticated criminals from trafficking cultural property in an illicit manner and to avoid creating safe havens for them, States need to cooperate to address the legal difficulties that are not covered by the UNESCO and UNIDROIT Conventions.

Indonesia believes that cooperation among States is possible through mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and extradition, as they are closely and mutually linked. Moreover, mutual legal assistance and extradition are instrumental in ensuring effective criminal proceedings against the perpetrators of such crimes.

Lastly, in addition to cooperation among States, it is important for all members of the international community to continue to cooperate within the framework of the United Nations and UNESCO in order to achieve increased mobilization and action to promote heritage values and to ensure the return of cultural property to the countries of origin, or restitution for it.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. At the request of the sponsor, action on draft resolution A/64/L.17 will be taken at a later date to be announced.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 43.

Agenda item 116 (continued)

Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade

Draft resolution (A/64/L.10)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held the debate on this agenda item at its 34th plenary meeting, on 2 November 2009.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Jamaica to introduce a revision to draft resolution A/64/L.10.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): I have the honour to inform the General Assembly that, since the introduction, on 2 November 2009, of the draft resolution entitled “Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade”, which is contained in document A/64/L.10, the following countries have become co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Bangladesh, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Micronesia, San Marino, Serbia and Syria. I should also like to remind the General Assembly that, when the draft resolution was introduced, on 2 November, 37 countries joined as additional sponsors, namely, Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Ecuador, Estonia, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, India, Israel, Japan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Monaco, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States of America and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. That brings the total to 147 sponsors.

As a result of informal consultations with Member States, agreement has been reached to revise the draft resolution to include an additional subparagraph in paragraph 13, which would read as follows:

“Also requests the United Nations Office for Partnerships, through the Secretary-General, to submit a comprehensive report to the General Assembly at the sixty-fifth session on the status of the Permanent Memorial Trust Fund, and in particular, on contributions received and its utilization.”

As fate would have it, today is coincidentally recognized by the United Nations system as the International Day for Tolerance. It is fitting that we are here to adopt a draft resolution that addresses the lingering consequences of the transatlantic slave trade, which continue to impact the descendants of the victims until today.

The placement of a permanent memorial at the United Nations will be an appropriate symbol of what the United Nations represents, namely, the promotion and preservation of the dignity and worth of all human beings. Those principles are central to the United Nations Charter. They are also principles that the

international community will stay focused on today in commemoration of tolerance, which brings to mind the theme we have maintained for our initiative, namely “Acknowledging the tragedy and considering the legacy, lest we forget”.

In conclusion, I would like to express my delegation’s sincere appreciation to all those who constructively engaged in the informal consultations to finalize this draft resolution. I am therefore confident that this draft resolution, like similar ones in the past, will be adopted by consensus, in particular in view of the strong support by Member States. We are indeed grateful for the sponsorship of 147 Member States.

Finally, let me express particular appreciation to the Member States from Africa and the Caribbean Community, which continue to play a primary role in advancing the permanent memorial initiative.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/64/L.10, entitled “Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade”, as orally revised.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/64/L.10 as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/64/L.10, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 64/15).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 116?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.