



General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

109th plenary meeting
Monday, 21 May 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Al-Nasser. (Qatar)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Kamara (Liberia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Agenda item 19 (continued)

Sustainable development

Draft decision (A/66/L.44)

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at the 2nd plenary meeting, on 16 September 2011, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 19 to the Second Committee. Members will also recall that, at its 108th plenary meeting, on 16 May 2012, the Assembly decided to consider agenda item 19 directly in plenary meeting, and adopted decision 66/561.

We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/66/L.44, entitled “Arrangements for accreditation and participation in the preparatory process and in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development of relevant non-governmental organizations and other major groups”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Falouh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to request that we defer consideration of draft decision A/66/L.44, pursuant to rule 74 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to allow us to continue consultations.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We agree that this is an important topic, which is why we should give it careful consideration and allow delegations to undertake and conclude consultations. We regret that there are technical difficulties at today’s meeting. My delegation believes that the request of the delegation of Syria should be supported and agrees that the consideration of the matter should be deferred.

Mr. Rosales Díaz (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Like the delegation of Cuba, given the importance of draft decision A/66/L.44, Nicaragua wishes to voice the need to defer consideration of the matter in order to allow more time for a decision to be adopted by consensus. Nicaragua therefore supports the motion put forward by the delegation of Syria pursuant to rule 74 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Mr. Archondo (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Bolivia also supports the proposal made by the delegation of Syria because it believes that, given the importance of the topic, more time should be devoted to its consideration. We know that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development will take place soon, but our delegation does not have instructions on draft decision A/66/L.44. We would therefore like its consideration to be deferred.

Mr. Sammis (United States of America): The draft decision before us today (A/66/L.44) should be a technical and non-political one for all delegations. It is not true that we have not had time to consider it. The list from the Secretariat has been before us for some

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time, and we should, as we called for in the modalities resolution 66/197, defer to its judgement as to whether or not those non-governmental organizations are qualified to participate in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. We see absolutely no valid non-political technical reason for a delay, and would hope that we would be able to proceed forward with this. By its nature, it is not a political matter. It has been made one.

Mr. Morrill (Canada): Canada also does not support the Syrian position. I repeat — we do not support it. In decision 66/544 the Assembly decided the process by which non-governmental organizations would be chosen. That process has been followed. Draft decision A/66/L.44 reflects the formal adoption of that process, and it is appropriate that we adopt it.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt): The Egyptian delegation fully supports the Syrian endeavour to adjourn the debate of the matter for the reasons it expressed, as supported by the representatives of Cuba and Nicaragua. The matter is really sensitive, and we need some time to consult and to find a consensual agreement.

Ms. Lalama (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation also supports the motion put forward by the representative of Syria to defer the voting. We also support its backing by the delegations of Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Egypt.

The Acting President: I would like to request the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to clarify whether he is proposing a motion to defer the consideration of draft decision A/66/L.44 or if he is calling for a recorded vote on the proposal. In the absence of any such request, I would proceed to the consideration of document A/66/L.44.

Mr. Falouh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Our delegation would like to defer the consideration of draft decision A/66/L.44.

The Acting President: It is my understanding that the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic is requesting, within the terms of rule 74 of the rules of procedure, to defer the consideration of draft decision A/66/L.44. Rule 74 reads, in part, as follows:

“During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, the motion,

after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote.”

Several speakers have spoken in favour of, and two speakers, namely, the representatives of Canada and the United States, have spoken against the motion.

I shall now put to the vote the motion submitted by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to defer the consideration of draft decision A/66/L.44. A recorded vote on the motion has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Argentina, Bahrain, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Guyana, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates

Against:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Abstaining:

Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda

The motion was rejected by 53 votes to 33, with 7 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Mauritania informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: Since the motion to defer consideration of draft decision A/66/L.44 was not

adopted, the Assembly will now take action on that draft decision.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Falouh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation regrets that consideration of the item on the agenda concerning the participation of non-governmental organizations was not deferred. Through that proposal, we had wished to ensure that the Secretariat addresses violations relating to the tasks that fall under its purview, in this case by ensuring compliance by non-governmental organizations with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the resolutions adopted by our international Organization, and in keeping with the principles set out in Economic and Social Council decision 1996/31. That is an absolute responsibility of the Secretariat that, if not fulfilled, will lead to breaches of the Charter and jeopardize the credibility of the United Nations.

We believe also that the Secretariat should ensure that the technical criteria set out in decision 66/544 are respected concerning activities relating to development issues, in particular arrangements relative to the participation of non-governmental organizations and other groups currently not in consultative status in the preparatory process and in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

My delegation takes note of the fact that a large number of non-governmental organizations are listed in the annex to the note by the Secretary-General (A/66/760). My delegation found that two Israeli organizations are in breach of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions by virtue of the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, in particular resolutions 240 (1967) and 467 (1980), as well as resolution 497 (1981), which states that the decision on the annexation of the Syrian Golan is null and void and without international legal effect.

It is for that reason that my delegation calls for the exclusion from the list of the two organizations listed in annex I to document A/66/760: Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael — the Jewish National Fund; and Life and Environment — The Israeli Union of Environmental NGOs. Those two NGOs declare on their websites that they are not bound by the rules of international law, United Nations resolutions or human rights principles

stating that their activities cover the occupied Syrian Golan and other occupied territories as Israeli provinces.

My delegation therefore hopes for the adoption by consensus of the draft decision contained in document A/66/L.44, taking into account the opposition by Syria to the inclusion on the aforementioned list of the two organizations requesting to participate. We call on Member States to support our legitimate demand. This matter, by its very substance, is not political; on the contrary, it relates to the credibility and the status of the United Nations and to respect for the Charter. We must bear in mind the need to uphold the governmental nature of the Conference and its preparatory process.

The Acting President: The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic has proposed an oral amendment to draft decision A/66/L.44. In accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the Assembly shall first take a decision on the amendment submitted by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Waxman (Israel): The start of the Rio+20 Conference is only 30 days away. Hundreds of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world are still waiting for accreditation, and Syria has chosen to waste our precious time by turning today's proceedings into another work of theatre of the absurd.

It is of course clear that the Syrian delegation's objection to specific Israeli NGOs has absolutely nothing to do with anything other than the fact that they are Israeli. Out of respect for the work that is still before us, I will not waste additional time explaining why those organizations belong at the Rio+20 Conference. The Secretariat thoroughly reviewed each and every application and approved nearly 800 non-governmental organizations, including the two organizations in question, both of which have made significant contributions in the field of sustainable development.

The Syrian delegation represents a regime with zero credibility, one that cares nothing about the development needs of its own people, let alone the sustainable development of the world. As we sit here today, the Al-Assad regime continues to butcher and torture its own citizens. In just over a year, more than 10,000 men, women and children have been brutally murdered by Al-Assad's forces. The slaughter continues as we speak.

It is an insult to the intelligence and hard work of everyone in the Hall to waste another minute on this absurd, desperate and cynical sideshow that has absolutely nothing to do with the Rio+20 Conference, sustainable development or the future of our planet. I call upon all participants to reject this clear abuse of these proceedings. Any other choice will be detrimental to the Organization.

For the foregoing reasons, my delegation will vote against the proposed amendment and calls on other delegations to do the same.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Falouh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I asked to speak because the representative of the Israeli occupation went off the subject. If he wants to discuss terrorism, we can discuss terrorism; systematic Israeli terrorism, with its very long history, has touched even the staff of the United Nations. We are all aware of Israel's actions and daily conduct towards the Palestinians.

Nevertheless, we have clarified our position, explaining that the reason we oppose the two non-governmental organizations in question is not because we wish to politicize the subject but because they violate the resolutions of the United Nations. Therefore, they should not be allowed to participate at the Conference.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would have much preferred to defer the consideration of this matter because we believe that the issue should be resolved by consensus. There is a clear objection from a delegation regarding the participation of two non-governmental organizations (NGOs). We wanted to avoid this type of debate. As it was not possible to defer it, I believe that the amendment proposed by the representative Syria, deleting the two Israeli non-governmental organizations from the list of participating NGOs, should be accepted.

Mr. Morrill (Canada): Canada supports the decision to accredit non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as drafted by the Secretariat in document A/66/L.44 and its supporting document A/66/760. The NGOs in question were evaluated against the same criteria as all of the other NGOs that applied and were, along with the other NGOs listed in A/66/760, annex I, recommended by the Secretariat for accreditation. It is Canada's view that

the Secretariat's accreditation recommendations should be adopted in their entirety. As such, Canada will vote against the amendment proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Sammis (United States of America): In the modalities resolution for the Rio Conference (resolution 66/197), the General Assembly provided that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may apply to the General Assembly for accreditation following the established accreditation procedure. Under that procedure, as described in decision 66/544, the Secretariat will make recommendations to the General Assembly that the applicant NGO is competent and its activities are relevant to the work of the Conference.

There was a reason that we provided for that procedure, which explicitly does not allow any Member State to object to a specific non-governmental organization and requires a neutral non-political process to be applied. The Secretariat, acting in an appropriate fashion, made those recommendations as provided for in A/66/760 and had no concerns about any of the NGOs that were listed in that document.

The effort we have before us today is a blatant attempt to politicize the decision and totally lacks credibility. I urge delegations to vote against the Syrian amendment for a variety of reasons, first, to preserve the integrity of the process that we established in earlier resolutions, and, secondly, to show that we will not allow spurious allegations to derail the work of the General Assembly.

Again, I urge all delegations to vote against the Syrian amendment and to support the adoption of the list as provided by the Secretariat.

Mr. Rosales Díaz (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation would also like to express its disappointment in our ability to defer the consideration of the draft decision, which we think is one that requires consensus. Our delegation supports the amendment that has been proposed by the Syrian delegation for a series of reasons.

First, the Economic and Social Council had already rejected granting consultative status to the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in question. In the opinion of my delegation, the General Assembly must be consistent with the decisions that it adopts. It is not possible that a free pass be given to non-governmental organizations that undermine the

stability of a given region and which do so through ongoing settlement activities on behalf of the occupying Power in the occupied territories — in the present case, NGOs that participate in the violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Nicaraguan delegation calls on delegations to vote in favour of the amendment proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Egyptian delegation would have preferred to postpone the consideration of the matter in question, as we explained earlier. But since the General Assembly has proceeded to consider the matter, the Egyptian delegation finds that the arguments presented by the Syrian delegation in favour of its request to delete the two non-governmental organizations from document A/66/760, annex I, are well founded, and we support them.

We note with great regret that one delegation has tried to excessively politicize the matter and go beyond the scope of the draft decision under discussion. The Egyptian delegation calls upon all delegations to support the amendment presented by Syria, taking into consideration all the arguments presented by Nicaragua, particularly the one specifying that the Economic and Social Council had previously refused to accredit the two organizations in question.

The Egyptian delegation also finds it strange that a delegation has suggested that it is not within the purview of the Member States to discuss this matter, whereas it is well established in the Charter of the United Nations that, once the General Assembly is in session, all Member States have the right to discuss such matters. Therefore, the Egyptian delegation calls upon other delegations to support the oral amendment presented by Syria.

Mr. Elshareef (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for taking the floor. We had asked for the floor originally, but the Secretariat did not grant me permission to speak. Therefore, we insisted on demanding the floor this time.

Our delegation regrets that the Syrian motion to postpone consideration of this matter — which, as you indicated, Madam, is quite important — was not adopted despite the fact that it was the wish of many delegations. Taking into consideration the statement of the representative of Nicaragua, we support the

amendment proposed by Syria to delete from the list the two non-governmental organizations in question. Our delegation will vote in favour of the proposed amendment. We urge all delegations to vote in favour of it.

Ms. Lalama (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would very much have preferred for action to be deferred. As that has not been possible, we support the amendment that Syria has put forth and we call on other countries to support it.

Mr. Elyes Lakhel (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Our delegation had also requested the floor during the first round, when Syria moved to defer the Assembly's consideration of the draft decision in order to allow for further consultations. We supported doing so because we believe that it would have allowed further discussion in order to adopt a consensus decision. We regret that the motion did not succeed.

We therefore support the proposed amendment by the delegation of Syria — which has also been supported by several other delegations, including those of Egypt, Cuba, Nicaragua and Ecuador — to delete the two non-governmental organizations in question from the list of participants in the Conference. We believe that their inclusion on the list constitutes a form of support for the occupation and undermines sustainable development.

Before we proceed to the voting, I would like to raise a procedural question. We do not have that list before us, or the Secretary-General's note contained in document A/66/760. As that note pertains to elements that relate to the amendment, I would like to know from the Secretariat whether we can proceed to voting in the absence of that document. We would like to hear a convincing argument in response.

Mr. Mostahkam (Islamic Republic of Iran): Like other delegations that spoke before me, we would have preferred to postpone the consideration of this item so that all delegations may thoroughly examine the issue. But now that we are actually proceeding to take a decision on this matter, I would like to express support for the oral amendment made by the Syrian delegation on this issue.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat for a response to the point raised by the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In response to the request for clarification from the representative of Tunisia, I would like to draw the attention of Member States to the fact that the General Assembly is taking action on draft decision A/66/L.44, as proposed by Antigua and Barbuda and the Republic of Korea.

The draft decision includes a footnote that refers to document A/66/760, which was issued on 3 April. Page 2 of that document contains a reference to the list of the non-governmental organizations that should be approved by draft decision A/66/L.44, should the General Assembly so decide.

Once again, the General Assembly is now taking action on a draft decision proposed by two Member States. All questions in this case should be addressed to the sponsors of the draft decision.

Mr. Mihoubi (Algeria): Algeria regrets that this question is being put to a vote. It would be better to reach a consensual decision by all the Member States. It will jeopardize the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Algeria feels it is better to consider those questions in order to reach a consensual decision about that issue and not proceed to a vote.

Mr. Elyes Lakhel (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): We have listened very carefully and attentively to the response by the representative of the Secretariat. According to his response, we find that the list was not distributed officially according to the procedure used in the past, when it was forwarded to all Member States in order to be considered closely and for a proper decision to be taken on the matter. In our opinion, the procedure used by the Secretariat was a new procedure that has not been used in the past. The list was placed on the website and was not legally and officially sent to Member States. We therefore question the legitimacy of such a novel procedure concerning the distribution of the list of non-governmental organizations to participate in an official meeting, namely, placing the list on a website without officially transmitting it in writing to Member States.

The Acting President: In accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the Assembly will now vote on the oral amendment proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Bahrain, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe

Against:

Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Abstaining:

Argentina, Central African Republic, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Nepal, Russian Federation, South Africa, Thailand

The oral amendment to draft decision A/66/L.44 was rejected by 58 votes to 28, with 9 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Mauritania advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/66/L.44. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Falouh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank all the delegations that supported our oral amendment to draft decision A/66/L.44.

I would also like to express our regret that Syria's amendment was not adopted, despite the logical basis and reasons supporting the legitimacy and reasonableness

of our request to omit two organizations from the list of non-governmental organizations participating in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). In that context, we would like to note that despite the fact that the draft decision was adopted by consensus, my delegation wishes the record to reflect our objection to inclusion of those two organizations and their participation in the Conference.

We would also like to express our gratitude for the efforts of the Chairs of the relevant Committees in preparing for the Rio+20 Conference.

The Acting President: I shall now give the floor to speakers who wish to speak in explanation of position following the adoption of the decision.

Mr. Estreme (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): As reflected in our vote on the motion made under rule 74 of the rules of procedure, my country would have preferred that the delegations had been given more time to consider this important topic. We believe that, unfortunately, the procedure was not entirely clear. We did not have before us the full list of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) referred to in the decision just adopted. We would have liked it to have been ensured — and we believe that in the future efforts should be made to do so — that such decisions would be worked out in consultation with Member States and that adequate time would be allowed for such consultations.

With regard to the amendment proposed by the delegation of Syria, my delegation abstained in the voting because the limited time available to us. I would, however, like to indicate that my country's abstention was not intended to prejudice the substance of the matter, particularly regarding possible actions by NGOs in the occupied Syrian Golan. That is a position that my Government has held in the General Assembly by voting in favour of such resolutions.

Mrs. Pessôa (Brazil): My delegation would also have preferred that the decision be adopted by consensus, but that was not possible. We are less than a month away from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), however, so we do think that the decision had to be taken at this point in time.

My delegation would like to offer the following explanation of vote after the voting concerning the proposed oral amendment to the decision. Brazil wishes to clarify that its vote on the draft amendment in question

does not change our national position on the occupied Syrian Golan, which has been consistently articulated in General Assembly debates and deliberations on that issue.

Mr. Gálvez (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile voted against the oral amendment to today's decision, thereby supporting the Secretary-General's recommendations in his note contained in document A/66/760. However, that does not imply that there has been any change in Chile's position regarding the occupied Syrian Golan, nor does it affect our Government's position in support of the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the Golan Heights.

Mr. Vidal (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Uruguay would like to state that its position on the decision just adopted does not affect Uruguay's traditionally held positions concerning the occupied Syrian Golan, or its support of the relevant General Assembly resolutions seeking compliance in that area, including resolution 66/80.

Mrs. Irman (Indonesia): I would like to express our concerns about the procedures employed in today's voting. The list of non-governmental organizations was not distributed for us to refer to. That is why my delegation abstained in the voting. In substance, however, we remain supportive of Syria's position on the issue of the occupied Syrian Golan.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): I would like to express the Algerian delegation's concern and our regret that what we have observed today is that those in charge of leading the process of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to a successful outcome have taken the risk of departing from the usual way in which the preparatory process is conducted — that is, in a spirit of consensus and consultation among Member States.

We have witnessed a last-minute manoeuvre to distract Member States from the commitment that they had already demonstrated to working together in order to secure a positive, constructive and consensual outcome to the Rio+20 preparatory process. That manoeuvre concerns the accreditation of non-governmental organizations. My delegation would like to put on record that it will not be without consequences for the preparatory process when we come to considering the substance of the Rio+20 Conference.

Mr. Muñoz (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to state that our position in favour of this decision does not in any way affect the position of Peru on the issue of the occupied Syrian Golan, nor our position on the contents of the various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

Mr. Archondo (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to add our voice to those who believe that the decision on the Rio process and its adoption are a sad precedent. We believe that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that participate in United Nations conferences should go through the Economic and Social Council accreditation process. We believe it regrettable, given such a short time, that the General Assembly should take a decision on irregular accreditation, the list for which was not distributed in a timely way and on which countries have been obliged to vote without having adequately considered the issue or having debated it in depth.

The delegation of Bolivia supports Syria's claim to the Golan Heights. For that same reason, it opposes the prospect of the two NGOs, which do not acknowledge that reality, participating in the Rio process. We believe that those that are against the Israeli occupation should also oppose the inclusion of the two NGOs, which will now participate in the Rio+20 Conference as a result of a hasty decision that we wished to avoid at the time but, unfortunately, were not able to do so.

Mr. Al Otaibi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should clarify that, most regrettably, we were unable to participate in the voting. Nevertheless, my delegation supports the proposal to amend the decision by deleting the two organizations from the list of the non-governmental organizations participating in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Mr. Jaiswal (India): In our explanation of position, we would like to state that, even though we voted against the amendment, it should not be taken in any manner to reflect a change in our long-held position on the Syrian Golan and related issues.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We deeply regret the fact that such a hasty procedure has taken place. We note that those delegations that opted to impose a decision in such a way have done so. We hope that such a decision does not set a precedent for future decisions concerning the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in other conferences, in particular those NGOs whose application for consultative status in the Economic and Social Council have been turned down.

Mr. Laguna (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation merely wishes to add its voice to those of other delegations that have expressed the sentiment that our decision today, which sought to allow civil society organizations to participate appropriately in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, should not in any way be seen as a precedent that alters our previously stated position on the occupied Syrian Golan, as other representatives have said.

Mr. Mugerwa (Uganda): The delegation of Uganda would have preferred that this matter be resolved through further consultations. That is why we abstained in the first vote. We would like to clarify that our voting against the proposed amendment was on the basis of the participation of those non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and it does not affect the positions that we hold outside the participation of the NGOs.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 19.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.