



General Assembly

Seventieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
18 December 2015

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 35th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 30 October 2015, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Dempsey (Vice-Chair) (Canada)
later: Mr. Hilale (Chair) (Morocco)
later: Ms. Kupradze (Vice-Chair) (Georgia)

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In the absence of Mr. Hilale (Morocco), Mr. Dempsey (Canada), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 72: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*) (A/70/40)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/70/56, A/70/111, A/70/154, A/70/166, A/70/167, A/70/203, A/70/212, A/70/213, A/70/216, A/70/217, A/70/255, A/70/257, A/70/258, A/70/259, A/70/260, A/70/261, A/70/263, A/70/266, A/70/270, A/70/271, A/70/274, A/70/275, A/70/279, A/70/279/Corr.1, A/70/285, A/70/286, A/70/287, A/70/290, A/70/297, A/70/303, A/70/304, A/70/306, A/70/310, A/70/316, A/70/334, A/70/342, A/70/345, A/70/347, A/70/361, A/70/371, A/70/405, A/70/414, A/70/415 and A/70/438; A/HRC/29/L.3)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/70/313, A/70/332, A/70/352, A/70/362, A/70/392, A/70/393, A/70/411 and A/70/412; A/C.3/70/2, A/C.3/70/4 and A/C.3/70/5)

1. **Mr. Oña Garcés** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the CELAC countries were proud of their multi-ethnic, multicultural societies, which were the result of migratory flows. The complex realities of international migration, including the recent increase in voluntary returns, required further study. Reaffirming the Community's commitment to the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, he said that the States of origin, transit and destination should work together to protect and promote the rights of migrants. Coordination, cooperation and inclusive dialogue were required to exploit the benefits of migration and address the significant socioeconomic and security challenges posed for transit and destination countries.

2. Of particular concern was the current exploitation of migrants. It was of utmost importance to take all measures to protect them from the activities of criminal groups, which sought to profit from their vulnerability. CELAC strongly condemned acts of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance towards migrants.

States should allow migrants to preserve their cultures, languages and traditions. They should promote more tolerant, integrated societies and refrain from adopting measures that discriminated against or stigmatized any group and could negatively affect migrants or members of their families. If cultivated, the skills of the diaspora could foster development in the countries of origin, transit and destination.

3. Expressing deep concern at the vulnerability of migrant children in detention, he stressed the need to protect the human rights of migrant children, particularly those who were unaccompanied, and provide for their health and education. Countries of transit and destination should address irregular migration from a humanitarian perspective with special attention to the best interests of the child. Although Member States were entitled to regulate migration within their borders, they should not infringe on the right of irregular migrant children to be with their families and to receive protection and assistance from the authorities of the country of destination. Discrimination in health care or education could affect very young migrants for life. For their part, the CELAC countries would seek to improve living conditions, particularly for children and adolescents, in order to discourage dangerous and irregular migration and encourage voluntary return.

4. The Community welcomed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including target 8.8 on protecting labour rights and promoting safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers. They reiterated the need to protect migrant workers, especially women, from exploitation and violence and to ensure fair working conditions, productive employment and decent work, and full integration into the workforce.

5. Irregular migrants were increasingly targeted by criminal groups. It was important to protect migrants, inter alia by opening channels for safe, orderly and regular migration. The CELAC countries were committed to combating the interrelated crimes of trafficking and smuggling of migrants. All States should ensure that the victims of trafficking or smuggling, especially women, children and adolescents, received full protection and care, and they should improve their capacity to address those crimes by establishing or strengthening focal points to coordinate international efforts.

6. The CELAC countries would be holding their fourth Meeting on Migration in November. They reaffirmed their support for General Assembly resolutions 69/167 on the protection of migrants and 69/187 on migrant children and adolescents and invited Member States that had not yet done so to sign or ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

7. **Ms. Sweeb** (Suriname), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that CARICOM aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of CELAC. Human rights were violated daily, often with impunity. Increasing numbers of people were threatened by pervasive poverty, growing inequalities, infectious diseases, armed conflict, intolerance, environmental degradation and natural disaster. It was crucial to address peace and security, human rights and development holistically and to create a social and international order in which all human rights could be enjoyed by all.

8. The right to development had been repeatedly reaffirmed, most recently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and it was time for the Working Group on the Right to Development to break its political impasse and begin to discuss how to implement it. CARICOM expected that under the able leadership of its new Chair-Rapporteur, the Working Group would be able to move the discussions forward and make the changes needed to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. For their part, the Member States must address the issues of migration, food security and global public health, as well as the international monetary and financial architecture, debt sustainability, market opportunities for developing countries, fair competition rules and the democratization of the international decision-making and norm-setting process.

9. As small island and low-lying coastal States, the CARICOM countries were particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, which undermined efforts to achieve sustainable development. The destruction wrought by tropical storm Erika had set Dominica's development back 20 years. CARICOM agreed with the Special Rapporteur on the right to food that, because climate change mostly harmed people and regions that were minimally responsible for it, climate change policies should aim at least to minimize if not overcome the

resulting injustices. Mainstreaming climate change in agricultural policy design, dialogue and development had been identified as a major policy domain in the Caribbean. At the thirty-sixth regular meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community in July, the region's leaders had called for the participation of all countries in effective international efforts to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

10. The CARICOM countries had a longstanding record of upholding human rights and respect for the rule of law and creating harmonious, just and democratic societies. On the eve of the new development agenda, they called for a revitalized global partnership to implement the right to development.

11. **Ms. Al-Temimi** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), said that human rights were at the core of her delegation's priorities and a reflection of growing international interest in human rights and efforts to ensure peace, security and development amid increasing human rights violations. As a result, her country had acceded to several international human rights conventions. It was guided in all its efforts by the teachings of Islam, which ensured respect for human rights, regardless of colour, ethnicity, race, gender or religion. The GCC countries encouraged all civil society organizations, human rights bodies and committees to propagate a culture of human rights.

12. Her country endeavoured to provide its citizens with health care, education, housing, employment and social security and, as a result, ranked very high on the global list of human rights-observing countries. Its achievements with regard to the protection of human rights made it an attractive hub for foreign nationals. Qatar also sought to enable women to participate in all political, economic and social fields and had important accomplishments in that regard. Women were now working in businesses and taking part in decision-making. Given the important role of youth, her country also attached special importance to education as a means to ensure social stability.

13. The periodic reports submitted to the Human Rights Council by the GCC countries highlighted their achievements. They had approved the Declaration on Human Rights of the Cooperation Council of the Arab Gulf in 2014. Her country wished to continue

inculcating the values of human rights through dialogue and tolerance, rejecting violence and all forms of extremism, and protecting the rights of the vulnerable. It condemned the illegal Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including the demolition of houses, the use of force against unarmed civilians, forced disappearances, executions and the construction of walls to isolate Palestinian communities. Lastly, she called on the international community to achieve synergy in its efforts to protect and promote human rights, peace, equality, the rule of law and accountability.

14. **Mr. Anshor** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), reaffirmed the group's commitment to promoting and protecting human rights. Civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights were interrelated and indivisible and should be addressed in a balanced, integrated and non-politicized manner.

15. Established in 2009, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) organized voluntary dialogues and workshops on human rights issues. It had recently adopted guidelines on aligning its work with sectoral ASEAN human rights bodies, as well as on relations with civil society organizations. Its most recent initiatives to raise awareness of human rights issues included a human rights course for trainers of journalists and a regional workshop on the role of youth in promoting human rights in ASEAN. In mid-October, following up on a 2014 ministerial agreement, representatives of AICHR and the ASEAN human rights bodies in the areas of women's, children's and migrants' rights had held a policy dialogue with their European counterparts in Brussels.

16. The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) was continuing to work towards the February 2016 launch of a network of social services agencies for women and children who were victims of violence. It had also organized a regional conference of senior officials on strengthening the protection and empowerment of women migrant workers.

17. ASEAN had held consultations on cultural and religious practices that affected the rights of children. In addition to conducting a regional study of child protection systems, it was developing standards for early childhood care, development and education and

guidelines for a non-violent approach to the nurture and care of children. Having signed a joint statement of collaboration in 2012, ACWC and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children had met on several occasions since then, including, most recently, the previous February. Promoting and protecting human rights were prerequisites for building a strong and prosperous community of nations. ASEAN would continue to articulate its vision of an economically integrated, socially responsible community.

18. **Mr. Tsymbaliuk** (Ukraine), speaking also on behalf of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, reiterated their support for the territorial integrity, political independence, unity and sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Since the Russian Federation's illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in 2014, reliable human rights monitors and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had continued to report ongoing serious and systematic human rights abuses by Russian authorities in Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

19. The States strongly condemned the human rights abuses committed against Crimean Tatars, ethnic Ukrainians, members of other minorities and persons opposed to the occupation. They called on the Russian Federation to take all necessary measures to put an immediate end to such abuses, which included discriminatory measures and practices, arbitrary searches, seizures and arrests, unfair trials, torture, the transfer of persons in detention to the Russian Federation, the withholding of medical care and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

20. Discriminatory laws imposed since March 2014 must be revoked. The Russian Federation must also give due consideration to the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee on issues relating to nationality, residence, labour, property and land, access to health care and education, as well as to the freedoms of expression, association, religion and peaceful assembly, and ensure respect for persons who self-

identified as belonging to national minorities, as well as the promotion and protection of their rights.

21. The States concerned called for the immediate release of Ukrainian citizens Oleg Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko, Ahtem Chygoz and other activists who had been seized in Crimea, transferred to the Russian Federation and detained and tried in violation of elementary standards of justice. The killing of Crimean Tatar Reshat Ametov and enforced disappearances of Crimean civil society and human rights activists Timur Shaimardanov, Seiran Zinedin, Leonid Korzh, Vasyl Chernysh and others must be investigated in a transparent way, and the perpetrators brought to justice. The Russian Federation must also reopen the cultural and religious institutions of the Crimean Tatars, and cooperate fully and immediately with OHCHR on the human rights situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

22. The States called on the Russian Federation to end its occupation of Crimea. To prevent the human rights situation from deteriorating, an international presence was critical, and in that regard, they encouraged the Secretary-General to consult regularly with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the relevant regional organizations. In addition, they encouraged OHCHR to consider preparing a separate report on the human rights situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and underlined the need to give the Human Rights Mission in Ukraine and other human rights missions and mechanisms full access to Crimea, including Sevastopol.

23. **Ms. Quek Shei Ting** (Singapore) said that, since its independence in 1965, Singapore's pragmatic approach to the realization of human rights had made it one of the most highly developed and safest countries in the world. Recognizing the need for integrated social and economic development, it had worked hard to build a peaceful and inclusive society ruled by law, in the spirit of Sustainable Development Goal 16. It recognized merit without discrimination, protected and promoted the well-being of vulnerable groups and ensured that Singaporeans could go about their daily lives in safety. The bedrock of Singapore was the rule of law and the presence of effective, accountable and transparent institutions.

24. Human capital was Singapore's greatest asset. It had long given priority to inclusive, quality education

and gender equality, and it had achieved near-zero dropout rates at the primary and secondary levels, as well as a tertiary gross enrolment ratio of more than 80 per cent. Through constant review and adjustment, it had created a widely accessible, highly effective and universally affordable health-care system.

25. Human rights and human dignity hinged on the protection of human welfare. Each country needed to choose its own path to improving the well-being of its citizens, based on the unique nature of its society. Singapore's path had been the rule of law, rejection of corruption and unswerving dedication to the progressive improvement of Singaporean lives.

26. **Ms. Santamaria Ramirez** (Colombia) said that, as a cross-sectoral issue, international migration should be addressed in a coherent and balanced manner. It was an inevitable result of globalization for which provision must be made; and guaranteeing respect for human rights must be a priority. States should avoid adopting unilateral measures that placed migrants in extremely vulnerable positions and seriously affected their rights.

27. Colombia reaffirmed its commitment to eliminating all forms of discrimination against migrants, regardless of migration status, including labour- and wage-related discrimination, and called for a safe and transparent international mobility system that protected the rights of all migrants, strengthened their contribution to development, encouraged social cohesion in a multicultural environment and improved the public perception of migrants as vital members of society.

28. Noting that Colombia's public policies on migrants were formulated and implemented in accordance with the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, she called on Member States to recognize migrants' positive contribution to inclusive growth and development and to promote and protect their human rights, including their rights to life, personal integrity and dignified treatment, with particular attention to the rights of migrant children, the reunification of families and the rights to health and education. Orderly, responsible, development-oriented migration was critical to reducing inequalities within and between countries.

29. **Ms. Yparraguirre** (Philippines) said that her country had made headway on providing homes and

livelihoods for those displaced by Typhoon Haiyan and would continue to disburse very substantial amounts to ensure their rapid return to normal life. In 2014, it had signed a comprehensive agreement on the Bangsamoro with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Once approved by Congress, the draft law containing the legal framework and governing law of the new Bangsamoro autonomous entity should at last bring prospects for peace and development to the people of the southern Philippines.

30. The Philippines noted with concern references to it in the report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association (A/70/266) and in the report of the Secretary-General on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity (A/70/290). Freedom of assembly, association, speech and the press were enshrined in its Constitution, and it condemned all attacks and violence against journalists and activists. A special inter-agency committee was tasked with inventorying all human rights violations; and coordination among prosecutors, investigators and police officials had been improved to ensure thorough investigations and successful prosecution in more cases. The Philippines adhered to the rule of law and was confident that its established processes and institutions and committed civil service would achieve justice for the persons concerned.

31. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on the promotion and protection of human rights, including ways and means to promote the human rights of migrants (A/70/259), the Philippines called on Member States to heed his recommendation to ensure that all migrant domestic workers were able to enjoy their right to decent work and to just and favourable conditions of work. During the negotiations on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Philippines had called for including the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrant workers, regardless of migration status. It strongly supported the Agenda and would remain true to its long tradition of protecting and promoting human rights.

32. **Ms. Bardaoui** (Tunisia) called on the international community to mark the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations by demonstrating a greater will for peace, security and development. Since 2011, Tunisia had promoted human rights vigorously. In addition to ratifying several international human rights treaties, it had had adopted a human rights-based constitution providing for the establishment of a

national commission on human rights. It had specific plans to facilitate civil society's involvement in human rights issues, revise the legal framework of the good governance authority and establish a sustainable development authority.

33. To be effective, anti-terrorism strategies must couple security measures with provisions for eradicating poverty, creating jobs for young people and reforming the educational system, and Tunisia had recently adopted an anti-terrorism law that did exactly that. Although it had been able to surmount the difficulties of democratic transition, thanks to its commitment to dialogue and the active participation of civil society, many challenges remained. It therefore attached great importance to strengthening cooperation with United Nations bodies and agencies.

34. In closing, she drew attention to all the men, women, children, elderly, disabled and others who awaited bold action from the United Nations and Member States, as well as to the people of Palestine, who still bore the yoke of colonialism.

35. *Mr. Hilale (Morocco), Chair, took the Chair.*

36. **Mr. Feltman** (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs), presenting the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization (A/70/306), said that 67 Member States had received United Nations electoral assistance in the previous two years. Electoral assistance was a system-wide endeavour and was provided in accordance with the fundamental principle of State sovereignty at the request of a Member State or a mandate from the Security Council or the General Assembly and was based on an electoral needs assessment.

37. As the focal point for electoral assistance, one of his roles was to ensure system-wide coherence and collaboration. To that end, the Department of Political Affairs had continued to expand the related internal policy framework and had strengthened the shared roster of pre-screened electoral experts. It would continue to strive to improve coherence and consistency, thereby increasing both accountability and cost-effectiveness.

38. The United Nations had also actively coordinated with and supported the development of regional and

sub-regional organizations, which were playing an increasingly important role in electoral assistance. Despite small gains in women's membership in parliaments, much remained to be done to overcome structural constraints to women's political participation in elections. For its part, the United Nations had begun mainstreaming a gender perspective in all electoral assistance and would continue to advocate greater participation by women.

39. The Secretary-General was concerned about elections that were marred by widespread misconduct and elections in which contestants refused to accept legitimate outcomes. Both situations undermined the electoral process and could lead to polarization, unrest, the breakdown of political dialogue, and violence. To increase the likelihood of outcomes being accepted by candidates, it was critical to mitigate winner-take-all and extremely high-stakes politics and also to strengthen the procedural aspects of elections. The Secretary-General called on all candidates and political leaders to encourage proper behaviour among their supporters, to commit to using only legal means to challenge election results, to accept final outcomes and to be gracious in defeat or victory.

40. **Mr. Cepeda** (Mexico) said that the protection of all migrants was central to Mexican policy on international migration. His country would be sponsoring the draft resolution on the protection of migrants, with a focus on the particular vulnerability of migrants in transit and the importance of protecting their human rights, in accordance with the recent Human Rights Council resolution on migrants in transit (A/HRC/29/L.3). The draft resolution underscored respect for the human rights of migrants in transit, regardless of migration status, as well as the need to provide access to basic sanitation facilities, refrain from automatically turning away migrants at the border and identify international protection entities. It expressed the commitment to combat the trafficking of migrants and stressed the urgency of addressing the causes of migration. The sponsors were seeking to increase the complementarity of the work of the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee in the area of migrant protection.

41. His delegation would also be sponsoring the draft resolution on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, with a focus on the possibly negative impact of anti-terrorism measures on civil society. While

Mexico recognized the legitimate concerns of countries confronting attacks by terrorist groups, it was important to reaffirm that anti-terrorism measures should comply fully with international human rights law.

42. **Ms. Phipps** (United States of America) said that the human rights situation in a number of countries warranted international attention. In the Syrian Arab Republic, civilian casualties had risen to over 250,000. The atrocities of the Assad regime had been compounded by the brutal acts of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and demanded a response. Regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran, she urged its Government to allow the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in that country. She also voiced concerns about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where the regime held between 80,000 and 100,000 political prisoners in internment camps, in which many were likely to die.

43. The United States remained gravely concerned about the human rights violations in South Sudan, including ethnically motivated murders, reprisal killings, widespread sexual violence and attacks on children, and it urged all parties to implement the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. In the Sudan, in addition to apparently indiscriminate bombings, deliberate attacks on civilians and scorched earth tactics, there were reports of sexual and gender-based violence, torture, arbitrary detentions and serious restrictions on the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association. She once again called on the Sudan to halt the violence, allow immediate and unobstructed humanitarian access and initiate genuine political reforms.

44. In view of the systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights occurring with impunity in Eritrea, she urged its Government to release arbitrarily detained prisoners, allow independent monitors access to prisons and detainees and restore the duration of national military service to 18 months. The Government of China had arbitrarily detained nearly 300 lawyers and activists since July and continued to hold more than 20 of them; she called for their immediate release and that of other, well-known political prisoners. She condemned China's new law on national security, which invited arbitrary interpretation, as well as the restrictive draft law on the management

of foreign non-governmental organizations, and urged China to respect religious freedom.

45. The Cuban Government continued its practice of arbitrary, at times violent, short-term detentions. With respect to Venezuela, she once again called for the release of Mr. Leopoldo López. The United States remained concerned at harsh restrictions on freedom of religion in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan; the restriction on freedom of peaceful assembly in Egypt; the situation in Burma's Rakhine State; the continued crackdowns on civil society in Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation; and the threats and attacks in Ukraine against opponents of the Russian occupation and members of religious and ethnic minority groups.

46. *Ms. Kupradze (Georgia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

47. **Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt) said that increasing intolerance, violence, extremism and terrorism required Governments to strike a delicate balance between security concerns and human rights. They also pointed to the need to promote development as both a moral and a security imperative. It was critically important for the United Nations human rights machinery to treat civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights on an equal footing. It should take a constructive approach based on non-selectivity, impartiality, transparency and objectivity; avoid politicization and double standards and respect cultural, social and religious differences.

48. Countries should engage with the relevant United Nations bodies at their own request, and steps should be taken to mitigate the negative effects of globalization and immigration on development and address the root causes of terrorism and extremism. United Nations bodies should refrain from circumventing their mandates through loose interpretations or generalizations. Egypt rejected any attempt such as the guidelines against intimidation or reprisals (San José guidelines) to codify new norms outside of the intergovernmental consultation process.

49. The countries attacking the human rights record of Egypt could not claim the moral high ground. Not only were they known for racial discrimination, xenophobia, defamation of religion and disrespect for the rights of minorities, migrants and refugees, but they had also for the most part stood idly by while Egypt and other countries, already dealing with tremendous domestic challenges, had accepted tens of thousands of refugees. As he spoke, Egypt was

completing the last step in its transition to democracy by electing a new parliament, which would measure its current laws against its new Constitution and make any legal changes required to meet its progressive human rights standards.

50. **Mr. de Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that too many people were still denied their basic rights. Every goal and target of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a prerequisite for the promotion and protection of human rights. By giving the Human Rights Council the ability to monitor the human rights system in all Member States, the universal periodic review had helped to re-establish the United Nations' credibility. In view of the importance of the human rights pillar, the Council's underfunding and dependence on voluntary contributions were a matter of serious concern.

51. According to the Global Study on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), the empowerment of women should be addressed in development and human rights programmes, not in the context of a Chapter VII operation. Moreover, it was time to move towards development- and human rights-based strategies for combatting and preventing extremism. His country stressed the importance of protecting civilians in conflict situations and condemned the militarization that had spread violence and destruction, triggering massive refugee flows.

52. Brazil was providing shelter for Syrians and Haitians, just as it had for Europeans, Arabs and Asians a century earlier. All States had a duty to respect, promote and protect the human rights of all persons in their jurisdiction, regardless of migratory status. Lastly, his country welcomed the recent appointment of the first Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy. Building on General Assembly resolution 68/167 on the right to privacy in the digital age, it would continue to work to mainstream the right to privacy in other United Nations initiatives.

53. **The Chair** said that Cyprus and Greece had aligned themselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Ukraine.

54. **Mr. Choe Myong Nam** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) decried arbitrary military actions against sovereign States and repeated massacres of civilians in the name of the war on terror, especially since they were intended to aggravate social instability

and even eliminate government and social systems in developing countries. In that connection, his Government denounced the United States' recent bombardment of a hospital in Afghanistan, which had caused numerous civilian casualties. It was also concerned about xenophobia and intolerance in Western Europe in the context of the refugee crisis, as well as racial discrimination, murder, rape and human trafficking in many parts of the world.

55. Politicization, selectivity and double standards also remained a cause of serious concern. The United States and other Western countries continued to impose collective sanctions on States that had different ideas and social systems. The human rights campaign launched against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was an example in that regard. Unsubstantiated naming and shaming and politically motivated country-specific resolutions should be categorically rejected.

56. Accountability for past human rights violations was very important in order to deter future violations. Japan had committed egregious crimes against humanity by militarily invading and plundering several countries, including Korea, and killing civilians. Those crimes against humanity should be addressed as a matter of priority, instead of groundlessly accusing others for political reasons. His Government would continue to reject all politicization, selectivity and double standards and to pursue genuine dialogue and cooperation in the area of human rights.

57. **Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein), speaking also on behalf of Iceland, said that, with its rights based approach, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represented a big step forward. However, to ensure its success by measuring and ensuring implementation, the Member States needed to give it an effective follow-up and review mechanism in the coming months. Furthermore, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council must lay policy groundwork in areas such as women's access to economic resources, human trafficking and ensuring legal identity.

58. Given the need for human rights work in every country, they welcomed the intention of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish a global presence for his Office. However, the effort could not be sustained without dependable, non-voluntary contributions. Member States should take the bold decisions required to correct the funding situation of

OHCHR during the ongoing session of the General Assembly.

59. While national courts always had primacy, the International Criminal Court could function as a catalyst for enhancing their capacity. Recent efforts in the Central African Republic and Sri Lanka were good examples of creative accountability models with an international dimension that also strengthened national judiciaries in a sustainable manner.

60. Despite considerable odds, the Human Rights Council had been able to create political consensus and review the human rights record of all Member States. However, it was increasingly stifled by General Assembly resolutions and decisions. Subjecting the Council to review by the General Assembly was not only highly inefficient, but also contrary to the agreed institutional balance. It was hoped that the Council's decision to establish a focal point for reprisals against human rights defenders could be implemented without delay.

61. **Ms. Mansouri** (Algeria) said that the promotion and protection of universal values and principles of human rights were the cornerstone of her country's internal and external policies. As a founding member of the Human Rights Council and a party to almost all core human rights treaties, Algeria fulfilled all its human rights obligations and submitted on a regular basis its reports to the human rights treaty monitoring mechanisms. It would also continue its regular cooperation with all of the Council's special procedures and with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

62. The human rights pillar of the United Nations must be strengthened, especially with regard to large gaps in the process of implementation. In order to increase the impact of the limited resources available to the Office and strengthen its response capacity in the field, the share of the United Nations regular budget allocated to human rights must be augmented. As a priority, OHCHR must increase efforts to achieve an equitable geographical balance among its staff.

63. The development pillar should also remain at the heart of the globalization process, through mainstreaming the right to development in all United Nations policies and programmes and within relevant institutions at all levels, including in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. While welcoming the important achievements made by the international

community in the implementation of international instruments and other mechanisms for the protection of human rights, it should not be overlooked that many people were still deprived of their basic rights and existed on the margins of peace, progress and prosperity. The right to self-determination of people under foreign occupation was a prerequisite for an international order based on respect for human rights and the dignity of people.

64. The ongoing instability and the prolonged effects of the global financial and economic crisis continued to negatively affect migrants, who faced high rates of unemployment and discrimination, including xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. The current migrant and refugee crisis must be dealt with through both a humanitarian and a human rights-based approach. Member States were urged to adopt stricter measures to protect migrants against all forms of violence or discrimination based on nationality or religious belief, including through policies and programmes to promote and enhance capacity-building for integrating migrants in societies and fostering peaceful intercommunity relations.

65. Algeria had consistently demonstrated its commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms based on its firmly rooted democratic foundations. With a strong, independent and impartial judiciary system, a progressive Parliament, a vibrant civil society, free media and independent national human rights institutions, his country consistently upheld the guarantees enshrined in its Constitution for the protection and promotion of human rights. A wide range of normative and constitutional laws and mechanisms had been established to guarantee all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and freedoms. His country would continue to play a key role both regionally and internationally to ensure the implementation of all human rights within an environment where the supremacy of the rule of law, good governance and sustainable development were available for all citizens.

66. **Ms. Shlychkova** (Russian Federation) said that, unfortunately, an increasing number of politicized issues were appearing on the agendas of international human rights organizations, raising concern that human rights were becoming an instrument for putting forward the interests of specific countries and groups. That could lead to the loss of the universality of human rights, the imposition on countries and regions of a

narrow interpretation of human rights under the guise of universal standards and the disappearance of the human rights paradigm. Discussions in the Third Committee had revealed a biased approach and a one-sided reading of human rights issues in the positions not only of certain countries but also of Special Rapporteurs and, in particular, in country-specific themes. Such distortions, both in thematic and geographical terms, were unacceptable.

67. There were a number of situations worldwide that required the close attention of the United Nations and its human rights bodies, including in a number of countries that positioned themselves as paragons of democracy. Concerns included the systematic violation of the rights of national minorities, the phenomenon of mass statelessness and the migration crisis, which had significantly exacerbated the problems of inter-ethnic and interreligious relations. Despite the declarations made by Western countries regarding the “sanctity” of the freedom of speech, there had been many attempts to close undesirable media outlets and to blacklist journalists and dissidents, thus limiting the population’s access to alternative information sources.

68. In different parts of the world, there were worrying signs of the growth of Nazism and aggressive nationalism, threatening life, security, health and the moral education of children. The use of the principle of extraterritoriality to avoid fulfilling human rights commitments under national and international law had led to gross violations. There was a growing number of reports by human rights defenders and the mass media about the use by different government bodies of systematic wire-tapping of citizens, companies and the media. Moreover, it was unacceptable to prioritize political and civil rights and ignore economic, social and cultural rights.

69. There was an increasing tendency to introduce a politicized agenda in the Committee, as well as issues outside of its purview, in particular with regard to the international legal status of territories. Those were attempts to draw the attention of the international community away from blatant national human rights violations occurring in the course of an internal armed conflict. Her delegation would appreciate it, if the representative of Ukraine could state whether the authorities were taking any steps to correct the difficult situation with regard to human rights compliance within its borders. Even the twelfth report of OHCHR, which could not be deemed unbiased, was unable to

ignore such facts as the establishment by Kyiv of an economic blockade of Donbass, violations of human rights by Ukrainian security forces and mercenary battalions — including torture, abduction, arbitrary detention, and the persecution of journalists and opposition civilian activists — or the lack of progress in investigating the deaths of civilians in Odessa and on Maidan square.

70. Unfortunately, the irresponsible actions by the Ukrainian delegation were indulged by a number of countries that would do better to concentrate on their own domestic problems, including by closing the Guantánamo prison, eliminating large-scale surveillance programmes, ending extrajudicial executions and killings, eradicating racial discrimination and violence, halting arbitrary police activity, bringing order to the penitentiary system, stopping child trafficking under the guise of adoption, defending the rights of migrants, preventing kidnappings worldwide, introducing a moratorium on the death penalty, and putting a stop to all violations of international humanitarian law.

71. European States also had a virtual critical mass of human rights problems, including the migration crisis; ethnic and religious intolerance; the rise of racism, xenophobia, neo-Nazism and anti-Semitism; mass statelessness; discrimination against national minorities; censorship; attacks on dissidents and human rights defenders; and sanctions against journalists. It seemed that it was always better to look for problems elsewhere than at home. Lastly, her delegation hoped that in 2016 the Committee would be able to concentrate on the truly timely and pressing human rights issues that required consolidated joint efforts.

72. **Ms. Kirianoff Crimmins** (Switzerland) said that her delegation was concerned by the difficult situation facing large numbers of people working to defend human rights, which had deteriorated in several regions of the world. The work done by such people was indispensable for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law; it was therefore essential to give them space to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. Human rights defenders were increasingly at risk and exposed to violence and intimidation, often while exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Those acts were violations of human rights and were more likely to destabilize a society than to stabilize it. Her delegation

called on all Member States to protect human rights defenders as well as their families and legal representatives, and to ensure that violations of their human rights did not go unpunished.

73. Switzerland was opposed to the use of the death penalty throughout the world in all circumstances. While the right to life was fundamental, the issue of the death penalty must also be viewed in relation to other obligations pertaining to human rights. Her delegation therefore appreciated the support of a large majority of Member States of the Human Rights Council with regard to a resolution on the death penalty that it had sponsored. The resolution highlighted the conditions under which using the death penalty constituted a violation of the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

74. In April 2016, there would be a special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. Her delegation supported the statement made by OHCHR that applying the death penalty to drug-related crimes constituted a violation of international law. The penalties imposed for drug-related crimes should be proportional to the severity of the crimes committed. The right to health was an important element in the fight against drug-related crime; measures to reduce the risks associated with drug-taking and access to controlled substances for medical treatment, in particular palliative care, must be the cornerstone of international drug policy.

75. As children represented a country's future, juvenile justice must be prioritized in the reform of justice systems and used as a tool for prevention, protection and reintegration. Her delegation expressed concern regarding the high number of children kept in preventive detention for long periods in many countries, including under charges of terrorist acts. An educational approach was the best way to achieve sustainable change, as it minimized the number of children coming into conflict with the law and helped those already in detention to make better choices for their own benefit and that of their community and country as a whole.

76. Migratory movements had become steadily more complex over the years, and new global challenges had emerged with regard to protecting the human rights of migrants. As the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants had noted with concern, the abusive

practices used to recruit migrant workers often led to violations of human rights, including exploitation and human trafficking. Switzerland was committed to implementing equitable recruitment practices and protecting the human rights of migrants, regardless of their status. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its targets regarding gender equality, 2015 had proven to be a pivotal year in terms of upholding and promoting women's rights. No country, Switzerland included, had entirely eliminated discrimination or violence against women. Her country had therefore prioritized the promotion of gender equality in its domestic and foreign policy and called on all Member States to do the same.

77. **Mr. Adeoye** (Nigeria) said that the human rights of his country's citizens were guaranteed by its constitution; those rights were inalienable and their promotion and protection remained a top priority for his Government. As it was firmly committed to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, in 2006 his Government had adopted a national action plan to promote economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. The plan, which had been updated in 2009, also covered the right to development, peace and a protected environment, as well as the rights of women, children and youth. A number of legislative measures had been taken to support human rights at the regional and international levels, as well as to specifically protect the civil rights of workers and employees.

78. Human rights were a vital component of the contemporary multilateral system, with the Human Rights Council playing a central role in raising their global profile. Nigeria had largely fulfilled its commitments to the Council through its active participation in its work and activities. As the universal periodic review had been widely acknowledged as a mechanism for constructive engagement with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights in all Member States, Nigeria had cooperated fully within the framework of that process and undergone two reviews, the most recent in October 2013.

79. His delegation expressed deep concern at the issue of migrants and their families, who continued to be subjected to discrimination and xenophobia in many countries, as well as marginalization, stigmatization, socioeconomic exclusion and lack of access to education and health care. Migrants were often unjustly blamed for crime waves and general economic hardship. His delegation strongly condemned violent

attacks on migrants and called on the countries where those attacks occurred to do more to protect the human rights of migrants and their families and ensure that they lived in dignity and safety.

80. More than two decades after the adoption of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, fewer than 50 States had signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention. In that regard, he noted with grave concern that developed countries that received large numbers of migrants had not signed the Convention. States that had not yet signed should do so expeditiously to demonstrate their commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of migrants and their family members.

81. The world faced great challenges in the promotion and protection of economic and social rights, having long concentrated on civil and political rights to the detriment of the former. An agreeable balance between civil and political rights on one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights on the other must be found. Otherwise, the discussion of human rights would be meaningless to the vast majority around the world, many of whom increasingly viewed their human rights in terms of improved well-being.

82. **Mr. Al-Obaidi** (Iraq) said that, since 2003, Iraq had established the grounds for a new political regime based on multilateralism and respect for human rights and freedoms and had also created a number of institutional structures to protect human rights, including units focusing on gender issues and women's rights. Normatively speaking, the 2005 Constitution served as the basis for a number of laws that contributed to the protection of human rights. Iraq had also adopted a series of long-term national strategies and plans to promote peace and security, eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, and protect human rights. It had also passed a law on the protection of persons with disabilities, in accordance with its obligations under the International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, which was the most recent convention to which the country had acceded. Iraq had also met its obligations in terms of regular, comprehensive and periodic reviews.

83. For decades, Iraqis had been and still were threatened with violence, while bloodshed had continued at the hands of terrorists under various

names, the latest of which were the gangs of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which perpetrated atrocious crimes such as kidnapping, rape, child abuse and mass executions. The country's security forces had done their utmost to face the threat of that terrorist group, which had gained territory throughout the country. In collaboration with the advisory support and aerial forces provided by the international coalition, the Government had managed to free many areas of the country and put an end to those terrorist gangs.

84. His delegation thanked all the States that had supported Iraq in facing the threat of terrorism and had extended emergency support to the displaced. It also called upon the international community to increase support to Iraq, which was fighting a transcontinental terrorist menace.

85. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, owing to its rich historical, cultural and religious background, his country believed in the protection of human rights and respect for human dignity and also recognized the importance of cultural diversity as a source of mutual respect and enrichment in the context of international human rights law. Cultural diversity was an ethical imperative that was indispensable for the protection of human rights. Respect for human rights and cultural diversity were therefore mutually reinforcing, especially with regard to minorities and indigenous peoples.

86. The Vienna Declaration called upon all States to refrain from unilateral measures, which clearly impeded the full realization of human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various international instruments, in particular with regard to the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being. His country consequently welcomed the appointment of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights and shared his concern that unilateral coercive measures necessarily ran counter to some provisions of the International Bill of Human Rights and peremptory norms and other provisions of customary law.

87. His delegation expressed grave concern that the laws and regulations establishing unilateral coercive measures had, in some instances, an extraterritorial effect not only on the targeted countries and populations but also on third countries, in contravention of the basic principles of international

law, which would likely induce the latter to apply unilateral coercive measures as well. It remained deeply concerned about the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the rights to life, health, medical care, an adequate standard of living, food, education, work and housing.

88. Lastly, his country welcomed the convening of the first biennial panel discussion on the issue of unilateral coercive measures and human rights at the 30th session of the Human Rights Council, as well as the progress report of the Council's Advisory Committee, which contained recommendations on mechanisms to assess the negative impact of such measures on the enjoyment of human rights and to promote accountability.

89. **Ms. Nguyen** Phuong Nga (Viet Nam) said that the well-being and happiness of every citizen were the ultimate goal of all her country's development strategies and policies. Viet Nam had further strengthened its legal system, policies and institutions in accordance with its 2013 Constitution to better protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. Discrimination in any form was strictly prohibited; freedom of the press and expression and the right to information were fully respected and promoted in accordance with the growing role of the media. Various socioeconomic programmes had been implemented with a view to ensuring social inclusion and protection for all. Thanks to its political commitment, as well as the significant involvement of all stakeholders, Viet Nam had recorded important achievements in ensuring a higher living standard and respect for human rights in all economic, social, cultural and political domains.

90. While Viet Nam shared the universal goal of the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, differences remained in the perception and assessment of human rights due to the diversity of historical, social, cultural and development backgrounds. The most constructive and universal approach to address human rights concerns was through dialogue and cooperation on the basis of respect for sovereignty, non-interference, and mutual understanding. The United Nations and the Human Rights Council in particular played a central role in that regard. Based on the principles of universality, fairness and collaboration, the universal periodic review had proven to be an effective and successful human rights mechanism.

91. As a responsible member of the Human Rights Council, Viet Nam had substantively contributed to its work by promoting its balanced agenda, upholding the principles of international law, and supporting dialogue and cooperation. Her country had actively been implementing all the accepted recommendations from the universal periodic review and was currently preparing for its national report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Viet Nam also engaged in regular constructive bilateral human rights dialogues with several partners and actively participated in regional efforts, particularly the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children.

92. The rise of conflict, extreme violence and humanitarian crises in many parts of the world were depriving millions of their basic rights and needs. The international community must strive to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development as prerequisites for the full enjoyment of human rights. The transformative 2030 Agenda had mainstreamed respect for human rights, including the right to development, the elimination of inequality across all goals and targets, while prioritizing vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Implementing the holistic Agenda would address the root causes of insecurity and conflict and ensure that no one was left behind.

93. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirmed the right to life, liberty and security of person, while Pope Francis had reminded the world that the right to life was at the foundation of integral human development. Nevertheless, that very foundation of human rights continued to be challenged, ignored and at times despised around the world. The dire situation of the most vulnerable members of society — the unborn, the elderly, the disabled, victims of war and violent extremism, migrants and refugees, women and girls who were victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation, and the extremely poor — all required a renewed international commitment to foster and promote the right to life.

94. The renewal of a human rights framework that restored the right to life at its foundation presupposed a society whose understanding of the common good included the protection and promotion of the right to

life for all. The common good required not only juridical protection for all life from conception until natural death, but also a sound juridical and political system capable of protecting the environment and providing for essential needs such as food, housing, work, basic health care, education and religious freedom.

95. A renewed international human rights framework rooted in protecting life must meet people's needs, while international human rights mechanisms must not de-emphasize universal and fundamental human rights in order to advance "new" categories and definitions of "rights". The selective prioritization of human and civil rights often clouded the Committee's discussions, at the expense of those whose fundamental rights were being trampled upon.

96. Although the Universal Declaration enshrined the right to religious freedom, heinous crimes were being committed against religious freedom, including executions, forced conversions, the levying of egregious religious taxes and the confiscation of property. Religious and ethnic minorities were disproportionately affected by such abuses perpetrated by violent non-State actors who were intent on destroying religious, cultural and ethnic diversity. Such crimes were partly due to Government failure, delay and inadequacy in combatting non-State violence, as well as policies and laws that restricted religious freedom and criminalized certain activities and forms of expression, such as blasphemy and apostasy laws.

97. Acts of violence committed in the name of religion were not only widespread but sadly on the rise. In almost every country where a change in the status and condition of religious minorities had been recorded, that change had been for the worse, sometimes due to legal or constitutional discrimination or to sectarian hostilities often linked to racial or tribal tensions, and in some cases, due to one religious group oppressing or even trying to eliminate another. His delegation called on the United Nations and the international community to strengthen their efforts to promote and protect fundamental human rights, especially in times of evident deterioration of respect for such rights.

98. **Mr. Pedersen** (Norway) said that his delegation had submitted two draft resolutions during the current session on the protection of internally displaced persons and on the situation of human rights defenders.

It was concerned about the alarmingly high numbers of internally displaced persons throughout the world, which had been exacerbated by armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations and natural and human-made disasters, as well as the inadequate protection of and assistance for such persons.

99. In addition, the increasing pressure on human rights defenders in several countries across all regions was a concern. Human rights defenders and their organizations were increasingly being criminalized and subject to arbitrary detention, sentencing and imprisonment. Disappearances, killings, torture and reprisals, as well as acts of intimidation, harassment and threats were also very serious issues. There was a global problem posed by the increasing gap between States' formal human rights commitments and the situation on the ground.

100. The promotion and protection of human rights was the responsibility of all Member States. Change must therefore come from within each country, with all States being obligated to protect the individuals, organizations and networks that were working hard to bring about such change by ensuring a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders. His delegation strongly supported the work of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and called on all States to issue a standing invitation and accept requests for visits by the Special Rapporteur, who should explore innovative working methods with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of his mandate.

101. Norway continued to be a strong advocate for the protection of civil society and human rights defenders, including women defenders and those detained or imprisoned for exercising their rights and fundamental freedoms. It had invited all Member States to engage in further dialogue on human rights defenders to secure a clear and principled resolution. While Governments might not always agree with human rights defenders, their ability to work safely and without fear of retaliation was a key element in maintaining sustainable, open and democratic societies.

102. States must fulfil their obligations under international human rights law to ensure the rights and safety of human rights defenders and all individuals who exercised the right to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly or association. The

well-being, safety and freedom of human rights defenders and all who voiced critical opinions were of utmost importance and instrumental in the promotion of peace, prosperity and sustainable development. In order to reverse the growing crackdown on human rights defenders, the international community, working through the General Assembly, must give a clear and united message in support of human rights.

103. **Ms. Pachoumi** (Cyprus) said that her country had a good human rights record, and its policies were guided by the positions of the European Union and accelerated by national civil society activism. Unfortunately, due to the invasion of Cyprus by the Turkish armed forces in 1974 and the continuing occupation ever since of 36.2 per cent of its territory, her Government could not apply its human rights policies in the occupied areas, as it could not exercise effective control over those areas. They were under the overall control of Turkey, which had established a subordinate local administration, as confirmed by the European Court of Human Rights, and condemned in Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984).

104. Human rights violations had taken place continuously since 1974 in the occupied areas, as had been observed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Commission on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights. Approximately 170,000 Greek Cypriots were internally displaced, denied the right to return to their homes and deprived of the full enjoyment of their home and property rights. The homes and properties of the internally displaced were being unlawfully sold and exploited, providing the means for an unprecedented construction and property-sale boom since 1974. Many properties had been redistributed to settlers from mainland Turkey. A deliberate policy of colonizing the occupied areas with Turkish settlers had continued, in violation of international humanitarian law.

105. Despite some improvements since the easing of restrictions on freedom of movement by the occupation regime in 2003, the remaining enclaved Maronites and Greek Cypriots in the occupied part of Cyprus still experienced adverse circumstances in their daily life, as their fundamental human rights continued to be violated. The practices towards the enclaved groups constituted discriminatory treatment on the basis of their ethnic origin, race and religion, as noted by various human rights bodies. The occupation regime

also created obstacles to the enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion, in particular by rejecting requests to conduct religious services in occupied religious sites.

106. The occupied part of Cyprus had witnessed widespread destruction and looting of religious and cultural heritage sites, including the demolition of around 550 churches and monuments. Her delegation welcomed the ongoing work to restore the Monastery of Apostolos Andreas, one of the island's most important religious sites. Missing persons and their families were also of major humanitarian concern. Her delegation called on Turkey to launch an effective investigation in order to ascertain the fate and conditions of disappearance of all Greek Cypriot missing persons, in accordance with the call of various human rights bodies. In particular, Turkey must provide unrestricted access to all relevant information in its archives and to allow complete and unrestricted access to all areas, including fenced military areas in the occupied part of Cyprus and in Turkey itself, in order for exhumations to be carried out.

107. Although her delegation commended the work of the bicommunal Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus which had resulted in the identification of over 603 Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot missing persons, that did not discharge Turkey from its obligations on the issue of missing persons, especially since the primary objective of that Committee was to return the remains of missing persons to their families. Her delegation called upon Turkey, in line with the demands of the international community and the resolutions and recommendations of the United Nations and other relevant bodies, to end the occupation of Cyprus and the violation of the fundamental rights of its people, thus offering all Cypriots a future where they could fully enjoy their human rights.

108, **Mr. Kydyrov** (Kyrgyzstan) said that, while ensuring the basic rights of migrants and their families should be a priority, increasing international migration as the result of economic and environmental crises as well as ongoing conflicts required more effective policies to combat illegal migration, human trafficking and labour exploitation. His delegation therefore supported further strengthening international cooperation and coordinated efforts by the Governments of the countries of origin, transit and destination, as well as cooperation with international organizations, especially the International Labour

Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

109. Employment programmes should be implemented, in particular for women and youth migrants. Projects should also strengthen the capacity of migration services, law enforcement and judicial bodies, paying special attention to the use of modern technologies for creating a migration databases, exchanging information and conducting education campaigns. Migrants, particularly women, were at risk of racial discrimination, forced labour, sexual exploitation and trafficking. As there were currently more than 500,000 Kyrgyz migrants working abroad, his country was taking institutional and legislative measures in collaboration with ILO and IOM to create an effective system of employment abroad and protect the rights of migrant workers and the members of their families.

110. His country's national migration policy aimed to streamline internal migration and create favourable conditions for the civilized development of external labour migration and promote increased competitiveness on the part of its economically active population. Priority was given to creating new industries and jobs that would help to stabilize migration outflow. Kyrgyzstan's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union was of strategic importance, as a regime of free movement for labour, goods and services within the Union would provide good opportunities for Kyrgyz citizens to work legally and have the same rights as citizens of other members of the Union.

111. As a result of the global financial crisis, there had been a sharp decline in economic growth and the number of migrant remittances, as well as growing market instability and rising food prices. Those factors had a serious impact on economic development and the full enjoyment of human rights, in particular for least developed countries and those in vulnerable situations. In such countries, debt relief, debt restructuring and the adoption of a multilateral legal framework to regulate sovereign debt restructuring were particularly important.

112. His country had presented its national report to the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in April 2015. The Committee had noted that some countries that employed Kyrgyz migrant workers were

not parties to the Convention, which could hinder the realization of migrant workers' rights. His delegation therefore called upon all States that had not yet done so to ratify the Convention in order to be able to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda, protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers.

113. **Mr. Pouleas** (Greece) said that, as humanitarian and economic crises and resulting human rights abuses were becoming increasingly common, a strong, multilateral human rights system must be a top priority for all countries, in order to achieve sustainable peace, security, stability and rule of law. His delegation was guided by the common values of the European Union and was committed to promoting and defending the universality, indivisibility and interdependency of human rights.

114. Greece actively supported all United Nations human rights bodies, agencies and mechanisms. In October 2015, it had presented its second periodic reports on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. At the end of 2015, his country was expecting the visit of the independent expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights. It had also submitted its candidacy for membership in the Human Rights Council for 2019-2021.

115. At the national level, his country's priority was implementing a coherent human rights policy based on the principle of equal and full enjoyment of human rights by all, without discrimination on any grounds. Openness, transparency and a standing invitation to all human rights mechanisms were key elements of that endeavour. Struck by the economic crisis, Greece was focusing on a human-rights based national sustainable growth agenda and adopting protective measures in all policy areas in order to provide for the most vulnerable segments of society. However, it was also facing the consequences of an unprecedented migration crisis and sought to cooperate with all relevant actors to manage migratory flows in an effective and humane way.

116. For the past 40 years, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Cyprus had continuously been violated, as a result of the 1974

Turkish military invasion and continued occupation of the country's territory. There had likewise been 40 years of recorded violations of the rights of the relatives of the missing persons, the rights of displaced persons, the rights of the enclaved Greek Cypriots as well as the rights of the legal owners of homes and real estate in the occupied part of Cyprus. His delegation was concerned that its calls were being ignored year after year, especially as the relevant judgements of the European Court of Human Rights had yet to be implemented, and many resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly were routinely disregarded.

117. The issue of missing persons was particularly important and sensitive for Greece, especially as it concerned many Greek citizens. Most of the families of the missing, in Cyprus and in Greece, continued to live with the painful uncertainty of the fate of their loved ones. Almost 200,000 Greek Cypriots continued to live as displaced persons, refugees within their own country. Turkey prevented them from returning to their ancestral homes and from exercising their legal property rights. The massive illegal sale of Greek Cypriot properties had exacerbated the problem. Greece supported efforts aimed at a comprehensive, viable, functional and just settlement of the Cyprus problem, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the principles and values of the European Union. His delegation was encouraged by the current impetus in intercommunal negotiations and hoped that its statement would be the last one necessary.

118. **Mr. Joshi** (India) said that, while the international community was embarking on a new and ambitious post-2015 development agenda, it was still deeply concerning that three decades after the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development, there had been no tangible progress with regard to strengthening the normative and practical underpinnings of the right to development, whose full and effective realization would be key for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and fulfilling human rights for all. Democratic governance and respect for human rights at all levels should guide and regulate globalization, including the right to development.

119. The scourge of terrorism posed a serious challenge to the full enjoyment of human rights, violating the most fundamental right to life, destroying

whole societies and threatening peace and development everywhere. There was no alternative to unequivocally condemning terrorism and its manifestations and adopting a zero tolerance policy.

120. Human rights must not be used as political tools. Selective naming and shaming of countries and intrusive monitoring not only went against the principles of impartiality, neutrality, objectivity and non-interference, but also hindered cooperation with the country concerned. Long-term and sustained improvements in human rights could be achieved only through the cooperation and full participation of the States concerned. Collective efforts should therefore focus on promoting genuine dialogue and strengthening national capacities without attaching any external conditionality.

121. As a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multicultural country, India took great pride in its unity and diversity and supported all efforts to build bridges of understanding between nations, peoples, religions and cultures. It steadfastly rejected all doctrines of exclusion based on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

122. In their respective reports, the Special Rapporteurs on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, on the right to food and on the right to education had raised pertinent issues related to the progressive realization of these rights. India had taken significant steps towards enforcing the justiciability of basic socioeconomic rights through the enactment of landmark legislation such as the Food Security Act and the Right to Education Act. The country had also launched an ambitious Clean India campaign to end open defecation by 2019. Its Government had also created a number of nationwide insurance schemes to provide social security coverage to millions of poor and disadvantaged people. Promoting the fundamental principles of human rights, his delegation was committed to ensuring rapid, sustainable and inclusive development to achieve the full realization of human rights for all.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.