



# General Assembly

Seventieth session

**71**<sup>st</sup> plenary meeting  
Thursday, 10 December 2015, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Lykketoft . . . . . (Denmark)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

## Agenda item 113 (continued)

### Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

#### (a) Election of seven members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

##### Note by the Secretary-General (A/70/355/Add.1)

**The President:** Pursuant to General Assembly decision 42/450, of 17 December 1987, and upon the nomination by the Economic and Social Council, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Members will recall that, at its 42nd plenary meeting, held on 28 October 2015, the General Assembly elected six members to the Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2016. Members will also recall that by its decision 2015/201 B, of 8 April 2015, the Economic and Social Council further postponed the nomination of one member from the Western European and other States for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2015, one member from the Asia-Pacific States, and two members from the Western European and other States for terms beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2017.

In this connection, the Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/70/335/Add.1. As indicated in that document, by its decision 2016/201 B of 12 November 2015, the Economic

and Social Council nominated Iraq for election by the General Assembly to fill an outstanding vacancy on the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2017.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on the basis of dispensing with the secret ballot?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare Iraq elected as a member of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a term beginning on 10 December 2015 and expiring on 31 December 2017?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Members are reminded that the Economic and Social Council decided to further postpone the nomination of three members from the Western European and other States: one for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on

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31 December 2015; one for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2017; and one for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2016 and expiring on 31 December 2018. The General Assembly will be in a position to act on these vacancies upon nomination by the Economic and Social Council.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 113.

#### **Agenda item 73**

##### **Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/383)**

**Draft resolutions (A/70/L.25 and A/70/L.27)**

##### **(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations**

**Reports of the Secretary-General (A/70/77 and A/70/96)**

**Draft resolutions (A/70/L.29 and A/70/L.30)**

##### **(b) Assistance to the Palestinian People**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/76)**

**Draft resolution (A/70/L.18)**

##### **(c) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions**

#### **Agenda item 74**

##### **Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence**

**The President:** I wish to take the opportunity provided by today's joint debate to address the ongoing humanitarian and refugee crisis. The reports of the Secretary-General under item 73 demonstrate the challenges facing the international community as we seek to address the unprecedented level of humanitarian need across the world. Those include challenges related to the forced displacement of over 60 million people worldwide, half of them children. Over the past four years, the international community has responded by consistently increasing humanitarian assistance. Countries close to the global humanitarian epicentres have dealt admirably with the millions of people fleeing conflict and instability, and a number of other countries

around the world have also welcomed refugees. Yet, the current scale of the global crisis is such that as of 30 November, United Nations humanitarian response plans were funded only by 49 per cent.

As this week's Global Humanitarian Overview from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs shows, the need for humanitarian assistance will increase even further in 2016. A more proportionate, comprehensive and coherent response to today's humanitarian and refugee crisis is urgently needed. That was the subject of an informal meeting of the General Assembly on 19 September. Similar issues were discussed at a plenary meeting on 20 November on agenda item 130 (see A/70/PV.59), which focused on the tragedies in the Mediterranean basin and on Syrian asylum-seekers.

From those meetings, it became clear that while Member States remain committed to advancing a more comprehensive response, doing so will require more leadership, more action and more resources. In that regard, the Secretary-General has laid out a road map to enable us to address this crisis. It includes meetings in February and March next year to address both financing and resettlement needs, respectively, related to the ongoing crisis in Syria. It also includes the World Humanitarian Summit next May, which will be an opportunity for the world to come together around a new deal for humanitarian action.

Furthermore, it includes a proposal from the Secretary-General to hold a high-level meeting to address large movements of refugees and migrants, to be held immediately prior to the general debate in September, for which he also proposes to submit a preparatory report. Over recent weeks, I have consulted with Member States on ways to advance this proposal. In that regard, I will shortly circulate a draft procedural decision for the Assembly's consideration. Throughout my presidency, members may rest assured that I will remain fully engaged with regard to the overall global humanitarian and refugee crisis.

Before concluding, let me touch briefly on agenda item 74. Yesterday, we marked for the first time the International Day for the Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and for the Prevention of This Crime. Agenda item 74 touches on an important dimension of genocide, namely, the assistance to survivors, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence. As we celebrate Human Rights Day today, let us be mindful of these people

and of our responsibilities to them. Also, let us work together to assist them to recover and to lead full and rewarding lives.

I now give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg to introduce draft resolutions A/70/L.25 and A/70/L.18.

**Ms. Lucas** (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the European Union and its member States, the draft resolution entitled “Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel”, contained in document A/70/L.25.

In 2014, 121 humanitarian aid workers were killed, 88 injured and 120 kidnapped in the course of their humanitarian mission. Although these figures are somewhat lower than the record numbers of 2013, they are still unacceptably high. The operating environment for humanitarian personnel, including United Nations personnel, has become far more dangerous, as evidenced by the increase in direct attacks on United Nations premises and vehicles. Fortunately, the diminished impact of those attacks against the United Nations also illustrates the importance of effective risk-mitigation measures. More and more, we expect the United Nations to stay and deliver its most critical programmes, including life-saving humanitarian assistance, even in dangerous environments.

In this year’s draft resolution, we notably recognize the direct, diverse and multifaceted threats that humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel face in the overall deteriorating global security environment, and we commend their courage as they continue to operate in such an environment, often at great personal risk. The paradigm shift of the United Nations system from when to leave to how to stay is commendable and fully recognized in the draft resolution.

We also strongly reaffirm that all deliberate attacks on civilians, including humanitarian workers and other United Nations personnel, and on medical personnel or facilities are clear violations of international humanitarian law, and that the perpetrators of such attacks must be held accountable. This year’s draft resolution stresses, *inter alia*, the need to promptly and effectively investigate such attacks and encourages the United Nations to develop a more systematic follow-up process with relevant host Governments. The draft resolution also notes the importance of giving due

consideration to the question of the safety and security of humanitarian personnel at the World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in Istanbul in May 2016.

Most importantly, through the draft resolution, we welcome and encourage the ongoing improvements and professionalization of the United Nations security management system. We commend the work of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Peter Drennan, and we welcome the planned integration of all security personnel of the Secretariat under his leadership. The draft resolution reiterates the robust mandate and additional guidance from the General Assembly for the essential work performed by the Department of Safety and Security, and more broadly by the United Nations security management system.

The European Union and its member States firmly believe that it is our duty to acknowledge the commitment of humanitarian workers, United Nations staff and associated personnel, support their work and do everything in our power to further enhance their safety and security. The draft resolution that we propose for adoption today demonstrates that this concern is shared by all delegations with the ambitious text of this year’s draft resolution, which was approved unanimously in the informal consultations. I wish to warmly thank the many delegations that took part in the consultations for their constructive cooperation and the many delegations that are sponsoring the draft resolution with us. We look forward to seeing this important draft resolution adopted by consensus once again.

It is also my pleasure to introduce, on behalf of the European Union and its member States, the draft resolution entitled “Assistance to the Palestinian people”, contained in document A/70/L.18. The draft resolution introduced today is the embodiment of the desire of the European Union and of the international community as a whole to help the Palestinian people. On behalf of the European Union and its member States, I reaffirm our resolve to provide assistance essential to Palestinian State-building efforts, to strengthen the economy and to address humanitarian needs. The draft resolution especially emphasizes the importance of the work of the United Nations and its agencies, particularly in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian population.

It urges all actors of the international community to provide economic and social assistance to the

Palestinian people. It recognizes the work done by other actors and humanitarian organizations to provide assistance to the Palestinian people, and stresses the importance of free humanitarian access. In order to ensure the effective delivery of assistance, the pledges made in Cairo for the reconstruction of Gaza must be honoured in a timely manner, and Member States should open their markets to exports of Palestinian products on the most favourable terms.

On behalf of the European Union and its member States, I thank all delegations sponsoring the draft resolution. I look forward to the adoption of the text of the draft resolution by consensus, as in previous years.

**The President:** I will now give the floor to the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/70/L.27.

**Mr. Zaballa (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*):** I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/70/L.27, entitled “Participation of volunteers, ‘White Helmets’, in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development”.

The White Helmets initiative celebrates 21 years of operation within the United Nations system this month, since resolution 49/139 B was adopted at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly in 1994. It was a pioneering initiative in its mode of response to humanitarian relief needs. We are very satisfied with the work of the White Helmets in the 2012-2015 period under review in assisting the delivery of humanitarian relief in various crises throughout the world. All missions have taken place in coordination with the national authorities of the countries affected by disasters with United Nations agencies and their partners. The White Helmets were created when debate was focused on the coordination of humanitarian relief. Throughout the years, they have participated in discussing integrated risk management, targeted assistance, community participation, the training of volunteers and vulnerability, among other matters.

Currently, an increasing number of countries share similar visions on ways to receive and provide humanitarian relief. The principles that encouraged the creation of the White Helmets are now broadly supported by the international community, especially since stress is not exclusively on response, but also on risk reduction in disasters and the responsibility of

States and the international community in the reduction of vulnerability.

As reflected in the draft resolution under consideration, the White Helmets serve as an instrument of solidarity, oriented towards the prevention of and response to situations of disasters by promoting social inclusion, food security, poverty reduction, the provision of humanitarian relief to vulnerable populations displaced or affected by conflicts, and cooperation in the construction of more communities that are more resilient to disasters, including those generated or exacerbated by climate change. Their distinctive tasks are the strengthening and mobilization of volunteer groups; the coordination of civil society organizations among themselves and with the various levels of Government; and observing full respect for the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality and their subsidiary principles of cooperation and participation, with the primary objective of saving lives and alleviating the suffering of affected populations.

Another element characterizing the actions of White Helmets is their support for community participation in the diagnosis of problems and the design of prevention and response tools, as we understand that supporting local capacities is the best way to achieve comprehensive risk management and the development of an effective culture of prevention. The White Helmets initiative works within the United Nations system; its work and underpinning philosophy bear fruit in the many humanitarian missions in which volunteers play a role in all regions and in the most complex disasters.

During the reporting period, White Helmets also generated close cooperation with the main bodies and agencies of the United Nations. Cooperation agreements were signed with the majority of those bodies in order to facilitate joint activities and contribute financially to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the Central Emergency Response Fund, the World Food Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Volunteers and the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC).

At the regional level, the strategic alliance with OCHA took shape in the push to discuss issues surrounding humanitarian aid and its coordination through the Regional Meetings on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships; cooperation in the field through specialized mechanisms such as

UNDAC and the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group; and cooperation within the framework of the Regional Humanitarian Information Network Project for Latin America and the Caribbean, among others.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, White Helmets played a prominent role in efforts to coordinate international forums related to the coordination of humanitarian assistance, the strengthening of subregional organizations linked to disaster risk management, and contributions to the creation of coordination and response tools. In addition, White Helmets shared in discussions and proposals in almost all international forums, and conducted joint activities with organizations such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Organization for Migration.

In conclusion, I wish to stress that this initiative was launched by a developing country. That fact should be assessed in its two dimensions: the effort required from such a country, and the potential for other developing countries to replicate the initiative. In the same vein, at a time when disasters are becoming less natural but catastrophes are causing an increasing amount of damage, the efforts of developing countries in the area of humanitarian assistance deserve special support because they bring together technical, professional and volunteer resources, and even financial resources and supplies, which have great value.

Argentina believes that it is important to highlight the special significance given to the allocation by the General Assembly of new support for the White Helmets initiative, because humanitarian work, together with the promotion of human rights, is a priority of our political commitment in the international sphere. We trust that at this seventieth session, member States will adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/70/L.29.

**Mr. Skoog** (Sweden): It is my great pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/70/L.29, entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”, the so-called humanitarian omnibus draft resolution. Sweden has facilitated this resolution since 1991, and we are proud to continue to lead the work on this important issue. After introducing this year’s draft resolution,

I will also have the great honour to deliver a joint statement on behalf of India and Sweden.

The annual adoption by the General Assembly of the humanitarian omnibus resolution reaffirms the unique leadership role of the United Nations in coordinating and responding to global humanitarian needs. Its adoption by consensus sends an important message of our collective responsibility to respond to humanitarian needs. It also reaffirms the unique legitimacy of the humanitarian action of the United Nations. This year, some new elements have been introduced and several others have been reinforced, making the draft resolution an even more solid policy platform for global humanitarian action and assistance. Let me mention three such areas.

Firstly, we have throughout the text strengthened our approach to humanitarian financing. Today, humanitarian needs are greater than ever, and even though, thanks to the great generosity of many countries represented here today, the resources available for humanitarian assistance are increasing, the gap between what is needed and what is available keeps on growing. We need to do more, and we need to do better. That is why the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing is so important.

Secondly, we have further reinforced the role of women in humanitarian action with new, strong elements in the text on the need for the inclusion of women in decision-making processes at all levels, and on the need to reinforce efforts to prevent, respond to and prosecute acts of sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies.

Thirdly, there is now a new separate paragraph that specifically addresses the need to strengthen support services for children in humanitarian crises. Children are among the most vulnerable in humanitarian emergencies, and we must all do everything we can to ensure their protection.

Moreover, this year’s draft resolution contains new and stronger language on other important issues, such as the need for stronger protection of refugees and internally displaced persons, accountability for the needs of affected populations, disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian response in the context of global health crises, such as the recent Ebola crisis.

Taking these new and reinforced elements together, we can see that we collectively have taken major steps

forward in our engagement. We have also advanced in terms of process, and I am pleased to note that this year we have managed to find consensus in the room and to close the text with the agreement of all parties. Finally, I am pleased to note that the number of sponsors has increased significantly compared to previous years, with strong cross-regional support for the important issues and objectives we outline in the omnibus draft resolution. That is a clear sign of the broad support for the humanitarian work of the United Nations, and I would take this opportunity to warmly thank and congratulate delegations for their active and constructive engagement on this year's resolution and for supporting it through their sponsorship. We look forward to its formal adoption by consensus later on.

This broad engagement is also a good sign in the run-up to the World Humanitarian Summit. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for taking that important initiative, and to thank Turkey for agreeing to host the Summit in Istanbul in May next year. We must now work together towards the successful outcome of the Summit. Sweden will certainly play its part in the process, and I look forward to working with all delegations in the run-up to the Summit and beyond.

It is now my great honour to deliver a joint statement on behalf of India and Sweden under the agenda item on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations.

The partnership between Sweden and India and our joint statement here today are reflections of our common conviction that the international humanitarian response system must be strengthened, as well as of our shared determination to work together towards that objective at all levels, as bilateral partners and as global champions. We all look at the same realities, we all read the same reports, and we all see the same harrowing images of women, men and children affected by conflict, crisis and natural disasters and in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Our fellow human beings need our help.

The humanitarian needs in the world are today greater than ever; 120 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance and 60 million have been forcibly displaced. Both those numbers are increasing by the month, by the day, by the hour. When the needs are unprecedented, we also need an unprecedented response. We need nothing less than a new global partnership for humanitarian action, bringing together the whole international community. India and Sweden's

joint statement here today shows how partnerships in humanitarian assistance can and should transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. We invite the Assembly to build similar partnerships and to join us in this work.

We, India and Sweden, reaffirm that humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law provide the basis for humanitarian assistance. The essence of resolution 46/182 is the call for collective efforts by the international community and the United Nations in responding to humanitarian crises. We are committed to preserving and strengthening respect for and adherence to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. We also emphasize that the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States must be fully respected during humanitarian action, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The primary responsibility of providing protection and humanitarian assistance in a crisis always lies with the affected State.

Affected populations should be at the centre of all humanitarian action. We encourage the humanitarian community and the United Nations to continue to enhance their accountability to and work closely with affected people in order to ensure an inclusive process and to promote a sense of local ownership. We also encourage closer collaboration between the development and humanitarian agencies of the United Nations. In order to reach the new and ambitious Sustainable Development Goals formulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), development actors must engage earlier and more robustly in humanitarian contexts and fragile States. In turn, humanitarian agencies must become better at involving development and national actors in planning and analysis.

Leaving no one behind in humanitarian crises will require both the short-term aid of humanitarians and the long-term stewardship of development actors, host Governments and other local stakeholders. This must be a partnership at all levels, and this is something we must all do together. We strongly condemn attacks directed against personnel involved in humanitarian or peacekeeping missions. Such attacks are attacks not just on the United Nations, but on humankind. We reaffirm the need to end impunity for such acts.

We also welcome the fact that draft resolution A/70/L.25, on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel,

which we hope to adopt later today, expressly commends the courage and commitment of those who take part in peace operations, including peacekeeping operations. They are standing up for freedom and for peace, and they deserve our gratitude, respect and support.

It is our collective responsibility as fellow human beings to address human suffering wherever it is found. Receiving humanitarian aid is a right and providing it is a duty, but India and Sweden believe that humanitarian assistance is not only a moral obligation to reduce human suffering, but also essential to the maintenance of international peace, security and stability. As the world is witnessing an unprecedented number of forcibly displaced people, increased migration flows, growing extremism and political destabilization, we must ask ourselves not only what the costs of humanitarian action is, but also what the cost of inaction would be. We all have a responsibility to respond wherever crises may arise. That does not mean that all Member States must contribute equally to the humanitarian response system, but we can all contribute in some way, be it through a swift, targeted response after a disaster, through regular core contributions to humanitarian actors working in the field, or through political support for humanitarian access. Every contribution matters and, taken together, they contribute to a better, safer and more just world.

India reacted quickly after the devastating earthquake in neighbouring Nepal on 25 April by initiating Operation Maitri, which means “friendship”. By immediately dispatching national disaster response force teams and special aircraft with rescue and relief materials, India’s swift intervention contributed to saving lives and helping people rebuild their homes. Sweden not only provides significant targeted contributions to most of the world’s major humanitarian crises, but is also one of the single largest donors of core funding to the United Nations humanitarian agencies. Core funding allows for strong, independent and efficient humanitarian actors with the flexibility to respond quickly to humanitarian crises wherever they arise.

Those are actions we take individually as bilateral partners, as neighbours, allies and friends. Sweden and India are both strong supporters of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). This year’s anniversary of CERF, which will be celebrated in New York next week, marks 10 years of providing life-saving support to millions of the world’s most vulnerable.

We together encourage every Member State with the means to do so to contribute to CERF and support that humanitarian action. Sweden and India are also partners in the Dialogue on Humanitarian Partnership, which we co-chair with Brazil, in which 24 Member States meet informally to discuss key humanitarian issues. We believe that this dialogue is a good example of the type of broad and inclusive partnerships that are needed to tackle today’s humanitarian challenges.

In conclusion, we therefore call upon all Member States to build similar partnerships and to do what they can politically and financially to ensure that today’s unprecedented needs and unprecedented global challenges are met with unprecedented solidarity and an unprecedented humanitarian response.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to introduce draft resolution A/70/L.30.

**Mr. Mminele** (South Africa): It is my honour to introduce, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, draft resolution A/70/L.30, entitled “International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development”. I would like to express the gratitude of the Group of 77 and China to Mr. Omar Rabi of the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations, who successfully conducted negotiations on the draft document.

The text of document A/70/L.30 is the result of the consensus reached through three weeks of intense negotiations and five informal consultations. The Group made a concerted effort to include the consensus of other groups and Member States. By introducing the draft resolution, the G-77 and China reaffirms the importance of international cooperation in support of efforts of the affected States in dealing with natural disasters in all their phases, particularly in the areas of preparedness, response and the early-recovery phase. At the same time, it is recognized that the affected States have the primary responsibility for the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within their territory.

The importance of the humanitarian principles contained in resolution 46/182 are also highlighted in the draft resolution. This year’s text also contains new elements, based on the recommendations of the Secretary-General’s reports, the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, adopted by the third United Nations World

Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan, from 14 to 18 March.

In conclusion, I would like to express the appreciation of the G-77 and China for the spirit of cooperation and collaboration shown by all our partners during the informal consultations, which enabled us to agree on the important issues addressed by the draft resolution. The Group also wishes to thank all Member States that are sponsoring this important draft resolution and looks forward to its adoption by consensus once again.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

**Mr. Vale de Almeida** (European Union) (*spoke in French*): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; as well as Ukraine, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

We live in a world in which crisis has become the new normal; a world in which 60 million people remain forcibly displaced often for years on end; a world in which 125 million people require humanitarian assistance; a world in which warring parties blatantly fail to live up to their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians, allow humanitarian aid to access people in need, and protect and respect humanitarian and medical personnel instead of deliberately targeting them. We live in a world in which conflicts rage for years, each with its ever-growing list of victims and horrors of every stripe, without the international community being able to put an end to it. We live in a world in which natural disasters continue to claim lives and property that could have been saved; a world in which the current tools at our disposal, whether financial or institutional, are clearly insufficient to meet the needs. All this is true despite the fact that humanitarian funding has reached unprecedented levels, at almost \$10 billion this year.

Since its establishment, the humanitarian system has made enormous progress and engaged in considerable efforts in recent years to improve humanitarian leadership, coordination and accountability. The multilateral humanitarian response system has been crucially complemented by an ever-improving response capacity at the local, national and regional levels. However, there remains a huge gap between the needs,

estimated at more than \$20 billion in 2015, and the funding available for overall humanitarian response capacity. As we prepare for the World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in Istanbul in May 2016, we can no longer be satisfied with routine responses.

(*spoke in English*)

There can be no business as usual on the road to Istanbul. The European Union and its member States are committed to helping make the World Humanitarian Summit a success. Earlier today in Brussels, the Council of the European Union — that is, the 28 member States jointly — adopted conclusions on the Summit. We believe that the Summit will be a historic opportunity to build a global partnership within and beyond the existing humanitarian system. The Summit needs to ensure that humanitarian action, based on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, delivers more effectively and ensures a sustainable future for the millions affected by conflicts and disasters. In our view, the Summit should deliver concrete outcomes and specific commitments on the part of all actors in a number of key areas.

First, there must be respect for international humanitarian law, including safeguarding humanitarian access and combating impunity for violations. That should top the international agenda. The thirty-second International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, meeting this week in Geneva, convenes at a very timely moment in view of reconfirming the broadest possible commitment to these principles.

Secondly, the Summit must deliver on significant reform, making aid more effective and more accountable to the people it aims to serve, and taking into account local capacities and innovative instruments. We must work together to ensure that the humanitarian protection agenda and action also genuinely delivers to those who are most vulnerable and most in need. Aid should systematically take into account the specific needs and capacities of women, girls, men and boys, with women and girls given equal possibilities to play leading roles in humanitarian action. The needs and capacities of persons with disabilities should also systematically be included in humanitarian action. Coherence between humanitarian and development programmes and financing must be put into practice, and resilience-building must be a key objective, also building on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1, annex) and on the Sendai commitments.



Thirdly, humanitarian aid and the system overall must also become much more efficient through improvements effected by all actors, including donors and operators. The principals of humanitarian agencies, through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, need to undertake an even more ambitious reform of that body and of the sector than those of the past decade. Ways must be found to provide aid and protection that are genuinely based on needs and vulnerabilities, rather than on status, sector or demography. The system should be strengthened, notably by common needs assessments, humanitarian response plans prioritized across agencies and sectors, stronger coordination with development actors and stronger coordination and leadership in the field. We very much look forward to receiving the Secretary-General's report and to the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing.

The European Union and its member States remain collectively the world's largest humanitarian donor. The solidarity of our citizens with those in need has withstood economic hardship in much of Europe. It is again being tested today by the migratory and refugee crisis. We remain committed to providing protection to those fleeing persecution at home. We have stepped up humanitarian aid and civil protection resources to match the growing needs of refugees. We will also maintain and enhance our humanitarian aid to affected populations in third countries, based solely on their needs and vulnerabilities. The objective of our humanitarian aid is to save lives and alleviate suffering wherever it is to be found. We shall continue doing our part in a principled manner and count on others to continue or to start doing the same.

Last but not least, we should not forget that humanitarian aid can never be the solution to a crisis. We urge the international community to work on political solutions to put an end to ongoing conflicts, which is the only way to put an end to the related human suffering.

In conclusion, the challenges facing the humanitarian community today are enormous.

As the General Assembly, we need to contribute to their work through the draft resolutions we will be adopting unanimously today: by further strengthening the agreed-upon framework for humanitarian action in the successor draft resolution A/70/L.29 to resolution 46/182, which was introduced by Sweden, one of our member States; by strongly recalling the need to

ensure the safety and security of humanitarian and United Nations personnel through draft resolutions A/70/L.25 and A/70/L.18, introduced by Luxembourg on the behalf of the 28 member States of the European Union; and by better addressing the consequences of natural disasters through draft resolution A/70/L.30, introduced on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Those humanitarian draft resolutions, to be adopted by the General Assembly here today, and others are, and should remain, genuinely consensual as a testimony to our shared humanity.

**Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar)** (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Arab States. The Group would like to express its appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General and for his reports entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" (A/70/77), "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel" (A/70/383), "Central Emergency Response Fund" (A/70/96) and "Assistance to the Palestinian people" (A/70/76).

We currently face tremendous challenges in our response to increasing humanitarian needs, especially in the light of increased tensions, armed conflict and the growing number of refugees, in addition to the increased occurrence of natural disasters with humanitarian and environmental dimensions. To face those challenges, we need more resources to improve our strategies, methods and coordination and to reinforce the international system so that it can be more effective, efficient and better coordinated.

The Arab Group attaches particular attention to the issue of emergency response and the provision of humanitarian assistance to those affected. It has participated within and outside of the region, directly and indirectly, through United Nations bodies. Members of the Group work to respond to natural disasters in a manner that is based on their system of values, international humanitarian law and respect for human rights. The League of Arab States works to coordinate humanitarian efforts in the region and to involve all stakeholders in those efforts at the national and regional levels. Due to the increasing number of humanitarian crises in the region, and in order for the Arab Group to respond better to those crises, we are developing a special humanitarian assistance coordination mechanism. We would like to underscore that all humanitarian efforts at the national and regional

levels should be based on the principles of international humanitarian law and respect for human rights, in particular the principles of territorial integrity and national sovereignty.

The members of the Arab Group participated effectively in the preparatory consultations for the World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in May 2016 in Istanbul. We look forward to the outcome of the Summit, as it will be crucial to the Arab Group and the international community. We call on the Secretary-General to continue his efforts so that all countries can participate in the consultations, taking into consideration the importance of respecting national sovereignty in their preparations for the Summit.

The Palestinian people face a difficult economic situation and lack access to humanitarian assistance due to the practices of Israel, the occupying Power. Israel violates the human and civil rights of Palestinians and Arabs in the occupied Arab territories, stifles the Palestinian economy and continues its unjust and inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip. We pay tribute to the efforts of the United Nations to provide assistance to the Palestinian people. The challenges and increasing needs faced by the Palestinian people makes it incumbent upon us to work collectively to resolve those challenges. That includes putting an end to the occupation. Moreover, the international community must abide by its commitments in order to end the Israeli occupation of the occupied Palestinian territories, which has been ongoing since 1967, and to help the Palestinian people establish the State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital. Furthermore, the international community must endeavour to enable the Palestinian people to exercise control over their resources. It should increase its support to the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and West Bank so that they may achieve their objectives, build capacity and disengage from the Israeli economy.

*Mr. Cardi (Italy), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Arab countries provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people and have increased their participation in the budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in response to UNRWA appeals to help surmount its huge budget deficit. We have also fulfilled a large part of our commitments made in the context of the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza. We would like to commend the United Nations humanitarian assistance agencies,

which do outstanding work in order to alleviate the suffering of all. The Arab Group stands ready to work with other United Nations bodies, especially the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in order to achieve the objectives to which the entire international community aspires with regard to responding to humanitarian and natural disasters, crises and conflicts.

**Mr. Morejón Pazmiño** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

CELAC reaffirms the Guatemala Declaration, adopted at the seventh Regional Meeting on Enhancing International Humanitarian Partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean, while also reiterating our full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and recognition of the full validity of the guiding principles on international assistance, adopted through resolution 46/182, with the conviction that affected States are responsible for protecting their populations and for coordinating humanitarian assistance and an effective response, including international cooperation. That is why we are deeply concerned by the continued erosion, in many cases, of respect for the principles and norms of international law, in particular international humanitarian law. International humanitarian assistance efforts should respect the national sovereignty of States, their legal frameworks, territorial integrity and national unity.

For that reason, CELAC also calls on humanitarian actors to respond within their respective mandates to the guidelines established by Governments, thereby ensuring that the measures taken respond to the most urgent needs, ensuring the timely provision of predictable and adequate resources, contributing to capacity-building with a view to carrying out humanitarian action, and strengthen transparency and accountability to and from communities regarding the effectiveness of their assistance. In addition, we urge Governments and other humanitarian actors, in line with their mandates, to undertake the necessary efforts to strengthen local, national, subregional and regional capacities to understand the main vulnerabilities and their causes, so as to manage and reduce disaster risks and achieve resiliency in communities.

It is important to foster and strengthen international cooperation in all its forms, especially those that favour

the transfer of resources, technology and knowledge, which can contribute to the enhancement of national and subregional capacities to address the causes and conditions of humanitarian emergencies.

Moreover, we recognize the role of the United Nations in coordinating international humanitarian assistance and the vital contribution of subregional, regional and international organizations and mechanisms. We therefore urge the United Nations system to harmonize its accountability and transparency systems and to promote the participation of developing countries in the management and supervision of its agencies. Bearing in mind the need for Member States and the relevant humanitarian organizations to work in close collaboration with national institutions, including local Governments and the private sector, to consider effective ways to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in urban areas, we welcome the initiative to convene the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, to be held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016. In that regard, it is important to bear in mind the need to address, within the new urban agenda, policies to ensure more effective emergency response in urban areas.

For CELAC, the World Humanitarian Summit is an opportunity to rethink, under the leadership of States, a multifaceted and complex humanitarian international architecture that is of a truly universal character and that puts the human being at its centre. We therefore are in agreement that it is important for all humanitarian actions to involve the protection and promotion of all human rights and to ensure equal attention to, and inclusion of, those groups considered vulnerable because of their age, ethnicity or disability.

We call upon States and other actors, in accordance with their respective mandates, to strengthen the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, taking into account the voices, the participation and the needs of the affected populations and communities, in such a way that guarantees and prepares them to respond from the outset to emergency situations and disasters. In that regard, we also call upon States and other actors to incorporate a gender perspective and the empowerment of women in all phases of humanitarian action.

Finally, it is essential to address and tackle the underlying causes and risks leading to disasters and conflicts in order to ensure effective and efficient humanitarian action. The effectiveness and efficiency

of such action in the medium and long term depends largely on what we as States do to protect our populations and how we assume our responsibility for coordinating humanitarian assistance in our territories, including international cooperation.

Consequently, we must also continue to work together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to implement concrete actions at all levels to eradicate hunger. For that reason, we welcome the CELAC Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and Eradication of Hunger 2025, which establishes a food supply and reserve programme for social and natural disasters, drawing on the existing capacities and experiences in the region, including the protection of small farmers and placing special emphasis on the vulnerability of small island States.

Allow me to reiterate the commitment of the States members of CELAC and our constructive support to continue discussions on these issues. The Assembly can count on our active participation and constructive engagement.

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

**Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser (Palestine):** I am honoured to deliver the statement of the delegation of the State of Palestine on the important agenda item on strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance, specifically with regard to assistance to the Palestinian people.

Today, I renew our appreciation to the Secretary-General and his team for the report on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/70/76), which assesses the humanitarian and development support received by the Palestinian people and Government and its effective impact during the past year. It has been a year that again witnessed the deterioration of the situation on all fronts — humanitarian and socioeconomic as well as political and security — in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, thereby compounding the hardships being endured by the Palestinian civilian population living under Israel's occupation, giving rise to greater need and making international humanitarian assistance all the more imperative.

We reaffirm our deep gratitude to all of the United Nations agencies and programmes, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine

Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, UN-Women, UN-Habitat, the United Nations Mine Action Service, the United Nations Population Fund and other humanitarian organizations that continue to provide vital assistance to the Palestinian people. That assistance helps mitigate the serious challenges being faced by our people in the context of nearly half a century of foreign occupation, a situation long deemed as unsustainable as it is unjust and requiring not only urgent humanitarian remedies, but equally urgent political and legal remedies that will ensure the justice and peace essential for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples to truly coexist and thrive in mutual security, respect and dignity.

Until the realization of such a just, lasting and peaceful solution, assistance remains critical and, as documented by the United Nations, it is making a tangible difference in the lives of Palestinian children, women and men. Indeed, in spite of the formidable obstacles of the occupation and the acute plight of the Palestine refugees in a region in turmoil, international support to the Palestinian people is alleviating suffering, giving opportunity and fostering hope. That includes, for example, the half a million children receiving education in UNRWA schools in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine; the women receiving maternal health care; the farmers and herders receiving agricultural support; the families receiving food aid; the youths receiving vocational training; the children receiving psychosocial support; the displaced given temporary shelter; the men and women able to find decent work through job-creation programmes; the families receiving support to rebuild homes destroyed in war or punitively demolished; the abject poor provided with a social safety net; the injured receiving life-saving medical aid and rehabilitation; the communities saved from the scourge of unexploded ordnance; and other forms of assistance, including, of course, for the development, reform and strengthening of the institutions of our State and national capacity-building initiatives as we prepare for a future free of occupation and a future of Palestinian independence and self-reliance.

Such assistance is providing relief to our people as they await the emergence on the political horizon that will ensure the realization of their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations. We recognize

that assistance as an integral part of the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is justly resolved in all aspects, in accordance with international law. Once again, we stress that a just and comprehensive solution is the ultimate aim and that humanitarian assistance cannot be a substitute for that objective. Immediate and serious political action is required to salvage the two-State solution, based on the pre-1967 borders in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative. Words and intentions alone cannot make it a reality.

As we continue to appeal to the international community, including the Security Council, to mobilize the political will to redress this injustice, bring an end to the Israeli occupation and peacefully resolve the conflict, we acknowledge the importance of this assistance in the interim. We reaffirm our sincere appreciation to all States, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and partners from around the world that are so generously supporting these United Nations agencies and programmes, in addition to the bilateral assistance being provided by many to the Palestinian people and Government. We recognize all donors, large and small, long-standing and new, regional and international, and express our deepest gratitude for their support.

We also fully recognize the importance of the consensus position of the General Assembly on the draft resolution (A/70/L.18) on assistance to the Palestinian people, presented and co-sponsored annually by the European Union along with other sponsors, and we reaffirm our appreciation in that regard. That support ensures the continuity of assistance that has helped sustain the Palestinian people, including more than 5.5 million Palestine refugees, through decades of conflict and crisis. It has helped to foster resilience and promote the well-being and human development of the Palestinian people, including the most vulnerable in our society, among them children, women and disabled persons, to the extent possible under the heavy constraints of the Israeli occupation and living in exile in the region for nearly seven decades.

The Secretary-General's report (A/70/76) presents a brief snapshot of the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people as Israel, the occupying Power, persists in systematic breaches of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. The

situation on the ground has further deteriorated, and humanitarian needs have further given rise to a toxic cycle, as corroborated by numerous other relevant United Nations reports.

The Israeli occupation in all manifestations constitutes an inherently illegal situation, affecting all spheres of Palestinian public and private life and undermining development — indeed, causing the de-development of Palestinian society. Whether it be the eight-year blockade of the Gaza Strip; the unprecedented devastation caused by the Israeli war on Gaza in 2014 and the wars preceding it; the daily military raids and escalating violence, particularly in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; the colonization of occupied Palestine through settlements and the wall; the destruction of Palestinian homes, property and infrastructure; the confiscation of land; the exploitation of natural resources; the arrest and detention of thousands of Palestinian civilians; or the numerous other human rights violations and measures of collective punishment — the negative impact is vast, with short and long-term consequences for the population, for the contiguity and viability of our State and for the prospects for peace and stability.

As indicated in the report, unemployment remains extremely high, at nearly 43 per cent in Gaza, where youth unemployment is a shocking 60 per cent, which the World Bank has determined to be the highest unemployment rate in the world, calling the Gaza economy “on the verge of collapse”. Following the July-August 2014 Israeli military aggression, more than 100,000 Palestinian civilians remain displaced, living in temporary shelters or the ruins of their homes, enduring lengthy electricity blackouts daily, extreme water and sanitation problems, with over 90 per cent of water unfit for human consumption. An entire population is traumatized. Notwithstanding the commitments made at the Cairo Conference, reconstruction in Gaza remains painfully slow, obstructed by the blockade and ongoing restrictions on the entry of construction materials, despite the temporary reconstruction mechanism facilitated by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. Reconstruction has also been delayed by the unfulfilled pledges of some donors. As a result, thousands of Palestinian families in Gaza face yet another cruel winter of dire humanitarian need and deepening despair.

Likewise, in the midst of the escalating aggression and violence by the Israeli occupying forces and settlers against Palestinian civilians and the continued imposition of a regime of severe movement restrictions, the humanitarian situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remains critical. There unemployment hovers at above 17 per cent. The territory’s fragmentation is gravely impairing socioeconomic life, with more livelihoods lost, access to education and social services denied and economic opportunity paralysed. The hundreds of Palestinian families forcibly displaced in the past year, particularly in so-called Area C and East Jerusalem, face the onset of winter homeless and remain dispossessed, all of which ensures rising frustration and hopelessness.

Considering that reality, the necessity and urgency of assistance by and through the United Nations to the Palestinian people cannot be underestimated. As outlined in the report, the assistance, administered under the auspices of the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in collaboration with the numerous donor and United Nations forums, including the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, addresses nearly every aspect of civilian life and governance and is aligned with the priorities of the Palestinian National Development Plan 2014-2016: State-building to Sovereignty. We are grateful for all efforts in that regard. We recognize the partnerships fostered among the United Nations, the Palestinian Government and the broader donor community. We also underscore that the Palestinian people are not just passive recipients of aid, but rather active partners in the endeavour.

As the international community embarks upon the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), recognizing the special challenges faced by people living under foreign occupation and colonial domination, we insist that the Palestinian people cannot be left behind in that crucial global undertaking. We therefore renew our appeal for the continuation of the principled assistance extended to the Palestinian people by the United Nations, while reaffirming that this support remains vital for as long as their inalienable rights, including to self-determination, are denied and such severe humanitarian and developmental challenges are imposed on them. We also stress the need for unhindered and safe humanitarian access in all circumstances.

With the international community's support and the Palestinian people's resilience, we strive to fulfil our national aspirations and right to overcome all those challenges within an independent, sovereign State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel and all its neighbours within recognized borders in peace, security and prosperity. Despite immense odds, we hope that goal will soon be realized. We urge the international community to exert all efforts to that end.

**Ms. Bird** (Australia): Australia welcomes the upcoming adoption of this year's General Assembly humanitarian draft resolutions. Today, we must accept that the humanitarian system is buckling under the strain of crises at a scale never envisaged. The crises in Syria, Iraq, the Central African Republic, Yemen, Somalia and South Sudan continue to cause unimaginable human suffering and unfulfilled demands for funding.

Crises today are characterized by endemic violence against civilians, including aid workers who work tirelessly in such dangerous environments. The use of sexual violence as a weapon of war remains abhorrent. We must end impunity for such crimes and do more to provide services for survivors. We must also demand unencumbered access to affected populations. It is intolerable that scarce resources are blocked from those in need, whether due to insecurity, bureaucratic obstacles or a blatant disregard for the law.

Disasters still affect 100 million people a year on average. Climate change will inevitably increase the risk, exposure and magnitude of natural hazards. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction represents an important blueprint to prevent those hazards from turning into disasters.

Among this litany of crisis and despair, there is cause for optimism. In the historic agreement in 2015 on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), we committed to leaving no one behind. That must start with those hardest to reach in humanitarian crises. By ensuring that our aid investments are risk-informed and address the underlying causes of vulnerability, we can increase the resilience of at-risk communities. The Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda have set high ambitions to work together to ensure sustainability, inclusion and prosperity.

The lack of political solutions to entrenched crises has generated record numbers of refugees and displaced people. The humanitarian system, while not

a solution, will continue to play its part in meeting critical needs. Humanitarian actors cannot, however, be the default provider of basic services in prolonged crises. Development partners must engage in such situations, and donors must incentivize collaborative programming.

Australia recognizes the importance of early recovery assistance in supporting the transition from relief to development, and we strongly support calls to localize humanitarian responses. That is particularly relevant in the Indo-Pacific region, where there is increasing capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters. We welcome the increasing recognition that the private sector offers new skills, ideas and resources. Australia also sees great potential in catalysing humanitarian innovation to drive solutions and improve efficiency. Australia is proud to have launched the Pacific Humanitarian Challenge, which seeks innovative solutions to three challenges to humanitarian action in the Pacific: communicating needs, improving logistics and building financial resilience.

Australia strongly encourages the humanitarian system to put the rights of people with a disability at the centre of preparedness and response. They are consistently among the most vulnerable in a crisis, yet their needs are routinely disregarded. We also strongly advocate for women's leadership and participation to be at the heart of humanitarian reform. More must be done to ensure women take their rightful place in leading humanitarian action. Embracing innovation and diversity also demands greater accountability to affected populations. The humanitarian system must be more transparent in decision-making and more responsive to affected populations.

Australia has high expectations for the World Humanitarian Summit to secure genuine, concrete commitments that will ensure the humanitarian system is able to address current and future challenges. It must also galvanize the political commitments needed to enable transformative reforms. The Summit will be the opportunity to set the direction for the last major piece of the post-2015 global puzzle: a humanitarian system fit for now and the future.

**Mr. Churkin** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Strengthening international coordination in providing humanitarian assistance is the most important task of today's world. In recent years, we have witnessed an unprecedented increase in the number and scale of humanitarian crises. Humanitarian needs

are growing rapidly, as well as the required volume of financial resources necessary to provide assistance to the populations of suffering States. Resources provided by donors are insufficient; as a result, the international system of humanitarian response is struggling to tackle the burgeoning burden. It is clear that the main reason for such growth in humanitarian need is the upsurge in conflicts. They represent 90 per cent of overall humanitarian financing. Furthermore, humanitarian crises are increasingly protracted in nature. All that leads to an increase in tension, slowing socioeconomic development, and mass migration.

Twenty-four years ago, the international community elaborated guiding principles for work in humanitarian situations. I am referring to the fundamental resolution 46/182, pursuant to which humanitarian activities are provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence and respect for sovereignty. We believe that those principles remain relevant today. Departing from them is fraught with the risk of undermining the independent nature of humanitarian assistance and subordinating it to the political and military agendas of the day, leading to problems in the delivery of aid on the ground and threats to the security of humanitarian personnel. Of course, we understand that the world is changing and that the United Nations humanitarian mechanism must keep up with such transformations. However, we do not agree with radical approaches to reforming the global architecture for providing humanitarian assistance. We are convinced that improvements must take place on the basis of adherence to resolution 46/182.

In our view, the key to reducing the unprecedented pressure on the United Nations humanitarian response mechanism lies in political settlement and the prevention of conflict. We believe that the international community must spare no effort in finding rapid and effective political and diplomatic solutions to conflicts. In that respect, we expect that the World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in 2016, will not only afford an opportunity to all participants in humanitarian work to exchange views and take stock of the current humanitarian response situation, but that it will also lead to additional impetus to international efforts to eradicate conflicts. We expect a strong, clear signal regarding the need for political settlement and the prevention of conflicts as a key factor to reduce the burden on the humanitarian system to emerge from the Summit.

We are somewhat concerned about the preparations for the Summit. We note the palpably insufficient involvement of Governments in the preparations process. That was demonstrated, *inter alia*, by October's Geneva global consultations. Instead of work on organizing and making concrete initiatives and recommendations, those consultations again entailed a general discussion of the broad and expansive humanitarian agenda. No progress was achieved in agreements regarding important aspects for the preparation of the Summit, its programme participation modalities for Heads of State and Government populating the substantive agenda, the nature and status of Summit decisions and the planned process for agreeing on them. Without a clear answer to those questions, it will be extremely difficult to ensure the participation of Heads of State and Government in the Summit. We hope that outlines of possible Summit decisions and information regarding the format of events in the Summit will be included in the relevant report of the Secretary-General expected in January 2016. We expect that it will be submitted in a timely manner and considered at the General Assembly.

Clear, predictable, timely and sustainable financing of humanitarian operations is an important prerequisite for the effectiveness of the work of humanitarian organizations in saving people's lives. In that context, we expect innovative, and, at the same time, pragmatic and realistic, proposals from the High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing. We would like to underscore that any review of approaches to financing humanitarian activity can occur only subject to the preservation of its voluntary nature. Making it mandatory, covered by the United Nations regular budget, will not promote the mobilization of sufficient resources. We also do not support all types of initiatives on the introduction of voluntary scales of assessment on the fair-share principle, under which overcoming the consequences of the actions in individual countries in times of conflict must be financed by other members of the international community. In that regard, we consider it important to attract new donors. We support the existing international mechanism for humanitarian financing, *inter alia*, the Central Emergency Response Fund. That also applies to such instruments as the United Nations Inter-agency Consolidated Appeal for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance.

The Russian Federation is a traditional and responsible participant in international activity for the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in

need. Over the past 10 years, our country has provided humanitarian assistance in kind to over 110 States throughout the world. Having sent over 600,000 tons of humanitarian cargo overall, in recent years Russia has increased the volume of humanitarian assistance provided to States, including through multilateral channels. In 2014 and 2015, Russia, through international organizations, has sent over \$190 million to overcome the consequences of humanitarian crises, and to provide emergency food assistance to populations in need as a result of conflict situations and natural disasters throughout the world.

We would especially like to touch on the difficult humanitarian situation in south-eastern Ukraine. In recent months, Kyiv has broken economic links, ceased the payment of social assistance, stopped providing banking services and significantly limited the freedom of movement of individuals between Donbas and the other regions of Ukraine. We are outraged by the fact that, in the period before the onset of winter, with its bitter cold spells, Ukraine's leadership is silently providing succour to criminal groups who are attempting to make living conditions for the population unbearable. That applies not simply to Donbas but also to part of the Russian Federation's territory — the Republic of Crimea, where Crimean Tatars and Crimean radicals have attempted to block energy by cutting off electrical-grid power lines in the Ukrainian territory adjoining Crimea. As a result, 1.5 million individuals, including children, child facilities and hospitals on the peninsula, have found themselves without light or heat. Energetic efforts on the part of Russian leadership and Russian electrical grid engineers were necessary to prevent negative humanitarian consequences. We immediately brought into play our fuel reserves and, on 8 December, we fully restored power supplies to the Republic. Currently, all measures have been undertaken to protect the Russian peninsula from energy blackmail by Ukraine.

Next year, we will celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of one of the major man-made disasters of modern times, namely, the Chernobyl nuclear-power-plant disaster. We very much hope that this date will enable us to again analyse the lessons of the disaster and reach the necessary conclusions for preventing such disasters in the future. We note with satisfaction that preventing man-made disasters was reflected in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. We attach special significance to achieving the objectives enshrined in the Sendai Framework. We are convinced

that the basis for enhancing an effective response lies in capacity-building at the national and local levels, with the United Nations system supporting efforts in that regard. We are in favour of the active use of tried and tested regional mechanisms for humanitarian response. In that context, we advocate the forging of an operational, timely exchange of information to prevent and respond to natural disasters. We are interested in the creation of a global network for the effective exchange of information and for a timely response to disasters between all national and regional centres for crisis response.

Russia is an active participant in coordinated international efforts in the field of mitigating risks in emergency situations. We also possess significant experience and capabilities in this field. We stand ready to provide our assistance to the development of practical international cooperation, and intend to participate in the work of creating United Nations databases, including information on the damage that natural disasters and man-made disasters create throughout the world. We are also interested in providing methodical assistance and assisting neighbouring countries, which will require further integration of technological forecasting and restoration. New security technologies must also be developed and more rapidly introduced than other types.

The situation in the area of the protection of civilians in military conflicts remains dire. Women and children and other civilians continue to fall victim to various forms of violence. In all armed conflicts, the primary responsibility for unswerving compliance with the norms of international humanitarian law, while taking measures to protect the safety of the civilian population, rests with the parties to the armed conflict. The same applies to issues related to the protection of humanitarian actors. Unfortunately, protection has been lacking in such situations. We are increasingly hearing of tragic events related to the deaths of humanitarian workers. We believe that every case of the use of violence against humanitarian workers must be carefully investigated and the guilty brought to justice.

**Mr. Plasai** (Thailand): First of all, on behalf of the Kingdom of Thailand, let me express our most profound gratitude to all the men and women on the ground, within and outside the United Nations system, who risk their lives and work tirelessly to provide the necessary humanitarian and disaster relief assistance around the world. We thank the Secretary-General for



his report (A/70/383) under agenda item 73. We also thank all the relevant actors, particularly the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as the United Nations lead agency, for their commendable roles in coordinating humanitarian and disaster relief assistance operations.

As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, humanitarian crises continue to be among the biggest challenges of our time. We are witnessing a significant increase in the frequency, scale and intensity of both natural and man-made disasters. The ongoing displacement of people resulting from conflicts in many parts of the world is unprecedented. It poses serious challenges for humanitarian work worldwide and requires a more rapid and effective response than ever before. Despite the urgency, humanitarian actors are still facing difficulties in providing assistance, due in particular to hindered access, an unsafe environment and insufficient resources. Allow me to highlight some of Thailand's perspectives on this important matter.

First, to ensure that present and future humanitarian operations are effective and sustainable, political will and commitment must be translated into concrete action at the national, regional and global levels. For its part, earlier this year, Thailand adopted a new national disaster prevention and mitigation plan, which incorporates the priorities for action of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The plan is based on an inclusive stakeholder approach and prioritizes the understanding of disaster risk in all its aspects, improved risk governance, and investment in disaster risk reduction and better preparedness, response and recovery efforts. It also underscores the indispensable roles of local communities, the private sector and the relevant stakeholders as a new form of partnership and cooperation.

At the regional level, Thailand's recent initiatives for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) include hosting, in September in Bangkok, the One ASEAN, One Response Roadshow and the ASEAN Resilience Symposium. The objective of that event was to familiarize all stakeholders with the ASEAN regional mechanisms related to disaster management, through which all the relevant sectors of ASEAN member States can unite as one in responding to disasters.

At the global level, this year presents a unique opportunity for the international community to shape strategic plans for the various post-2015 processes,

including further developing the humanitarian dimension of sustainable development. First and foremost, coherence among the Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the twenty-first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change outcome must be ensured. The World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 will be an important forum to further mobilize political and public support in that regard.

Secondly, while the need for humanitarian assistance is constantly on the increase, resources for such assistance remain inadequate. The widening resource gap means that we need to learn to do more with less. For more efficient management of these resources, we share the Secretary-General's view that we should resort more to development and preventive means. We also need to work for better sharing of the burden in addressing humanitarian crises and disasters and for stronger coordination and closer partnerships among Member States as well as other humanitarian actors, including the private sector and civil society.

Thirdly, addressing the root causes and promoting stability and development in conflict areas can contribute meaningfully to a sustainable humanitarian solution. New approaches should be developed to ensure the linkage between humanitarian and development assistance with a view to building resilience. There is also a need to balance immediate response and long-term solutions to disasters, through risk assessment, prevention and preparedness.

Fourthly, United Nations peacekeeping missions have a significant role to play in restoring a security environment conducive to successful humanitarian operations. They should all be clearly mandated with the protection of civilians and humanitarian assistance tasks. Their safety and security must also be ensured while performing humanitarian-related mandates.

Fifthly, humanitarian action is not designed to resolve conflict or to serve political purposes but to protect human dignity and to save lives. Therefore, the provision of humanitarian assistance must not be linked to, or set as preconditions for, progress on the political front. At the same time, the conduct of humanitarian activities must strictly adhere to the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in order to avoid mistrust, which would jeopardize the achievement of humanitarian objectives.

Sixthly, Thailand firmly believes that the provision of humanitarian assistance is a multi-agency activity. It is therefore important that this work be well coordinated, particularly with the Government concerned.

No single country can handle the current global humanitarian crises alone. It is high time that the international community demonstrate its solidarity and strengthen cooperation in addressing them. The Kingdom of Thailand places humanitarian assistance at the core of its foreign policy and is committed to continue working closely with the United Nations and all Member States, as well as other partners, in providing assistance and support to those in need.

**Ms. Amadeo** (United States of America): The United States wishes to reaffirm its strong support for the United Nations-led international humanitarian system. The year 2016 will be important, as it will provide us with an opportunity to make measurable progress on the humanitarian agenda broadly, and on the protracted crises that underpin the highest global displacement numbers in recorded history. We will participate at a very senior level in the upcoming Syria pledging conference in February. Securing additional resources for addressing that catastrophe is a top priority for the United States. We thank the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway and Kuwait for hosting the conference, and we urge all Member States to contribute to the United Nations humanitarian appeals and agencies, as well as to other key international humanitarian organizations, to ensure that their important work continues.

We are very pleased that the Secretary-General has announced a high-level event to be led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva this March on durable solutions for refugees. We look forward to participating and to the opportunity to help shape the outcomes that will facilitate more resettlement opportunities for refugees, voluntary return and integration options and greater access to safe, legal channels of admission for refugees and other vulnerable migrants in need of protection. That important event will be followed by the World Humanitarian Summit in May. We strongly support the Summit and have been actively involved in the preparations to date. Our broad goals for the Summit include: strengthening and modernizing the United Nations humanitarian architecture; securing more humanitarian financing; improving coherence between humanitarian and development assistance, particularly in situations of protracted displacement; and improving

the protection of civilians, especially for women and girls. We will also look to expand our partnerships with civil society and the private sector.

The Secretary-General's announcement of a high-level event on refugees and migration during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly is most welcome. That will be an important opportunity for us to further advance our humanitarian agenda, including, more specifically, as it relates to refugees and migrants. We look forward to working with the United Nations on that effort.

As members all know, violent conflicts represent about 80 per cent of the situations to which we are asking humanitarian organizations to respond. We will continue to work with all of our partners to help ensure that staff and organizations are well equipped to work effectively in those environments. That may mean new ways of working and coordinating. Too many parties to armed conflicts demonstrate a complete disregard for their obligations under international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles and, rather, exhibit contempt for human life. That is one of the most critical challenges for the protection of civilians and our ability to provide life-saving assistance where it is needed most. We will continue to explore ways to strengthen respect for, and compliance with, international humanitarian law as well as the basic principles that underpin all effective humanitarian action: neutrality, impartiality, independence and humanity.

In conclusion, let me say very clearly that, while global attention and focus has most recently centred on the Syria crisis and the spillover effects in Europe, the United States will continue to address the equally compelling and horrific humanitarian situations in Iraq, Yemen, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, the Sahel and Ukraine. We cannot forget the world's other protracted crises, which are too numerous to mention, nor can we afford to lose our focus on the global nature of the refugee displacement and migration crises before us.

**Mr. Lauber** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to take the floor as negotiations on humanitarian draft resolutions have just concluded. The negotiations came at a critical juncture and coincided with the renewal of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the new Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), the twenty-first Conference of the Parties to the United

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the World Humanitarian Summit to be held in Istanbul in May 2016. Those important milestones will have a positive impact on the lives of the most vulnerable people, and will play either a direct or indirect role in shaping future humanitarian action.

At the outset, we would like to acknowledge some new additions that have been made to this year's draft resolutions. For the first time, reference has been made to accountability to affected populations, as well as to the need to prevent and respond to violations and abuses committed against children. In our view, other issues should be raised, including the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence; increased accountability for those responsible for crimes and acts of violence against humanitarian personnel; the need for the United Nations system to better prepare and coordinate its response in the event of the outbreak of an infectious disease; and the strengthening of the Central Emergency Response Fund. However, we regret that, yet again, this year's negotiations did not result in notable progress in the crucial area of humanitarian access, which is a prerequisite for protection. Today, more people than ever have been affected by crises and conflicts, with 60 million currently displaced. In that regard, it is important to recall that humanitarian action should not be politicized.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress three important points: first, the respect for humanitarian principles; second, risk management and reducing vulnerability; and third, the World Humanitarian Summit.

On the first point — respect for humanitarian principles — we should bear in mind that the five largest humanitarian crises in 2015, namely, Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, Iraq and the Sudan, were each linked to conflict. In that respect, the thirty-second International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which came to an end today in Geneva, placed the fundamental humanitarian principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent — principles that, this year, celebrate 50 years of existence — at the centre of debates. Respect for those principles, in particular humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, remain essential to humanitarian assistance, especially when dealing with war-torn systems and societies. The same holds true for compliance with the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. All of those

instruments provide for all parties to armed conflicts to respect and protect humanitarian missions.

With respect to the second point — risk management and reducing vulnerability — we know that reduced risk leads to reduced vulnerability and, as a result, reduced costs. We receive regular reminders that barely half of humanitarian need, which amounts to \$19.5 billion, is currently met. While it is true that we urgently need new policies and instruments to address the fast-growing gap between needs and available resources, we also need more robust and systematic preventive action that is risk-sensitive and capable of addressing the root causes of recurrent conflicts. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 provides further evidence of the importance of addressing the underlying risk factors more comprehensively. It should be recalled that Member States have a collective responsibility to implement the Sendai Framework, while at the same time aiming for a broader United Nations-wide strategy. In that regard, the positioning of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and its interdependence with the United Nations system, in particular with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, should be improved and based on the heightened readiness of United Nations agencies to cooperate and collaborate.

With regard to the third point concerning the World Humanitarian Summit, we all agree that the humanitarian response must be improved. The World Humanitarian Summit will present an outstanding opportunity to reaffirm the centrality of protection and the importance of placing the people affected by crises, in particular women and children, at the centre of humanitarian action. At the same time, we must look at the humanitarian system itself and identify how it can best respond to the needs of the most vulnerable. The reforms that have already been implemented, similar to those implemented in the framework of the Transformative Agenda, for example, should continue. In preparing for the Istanbul Summit, we need to engage more closely with humanitarian organizations, in particular via the Inter-Agency Standing Committee system, in order to ensure the development of a set of concrete and achievable commitments that are aimed at a stronger, more effective and context-specific humanitarian system, and based on the recommendations formulated during the global consultations on the Summit, which were held in Geneva in October.

Let there be no mistake — the humanitarian challenges that the international community must face are all interconnected. We cannot address them in isolation. Coordinated efforts and a shared vision of humanity are paramount if we are to meet those challenges.

**Mr. Wang Min** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his reports submitted under this item. The year 2015 has witnessed frequent natural disasters and the intertwinement of conventional and non-conventional security threats, such as armed conflicts, terrorism and violent extremism. They have posed severe challenges in terms of the resources and capacity of the global humanitarian response. It is imperative that the international community strengthen cooperation and respond to those challenges with effective strategies and measures that address both the symptoms and the root causes. In that connection, China wishes to stress the several following points.

First, international humanitarian assistance must comply with the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference in internal affairs and the peaceful settlement of disputes, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the basic principles of humanitarian assistance established by resolution 46/182, namely, humanism, neutrality and impartiality. Humanitarian responses should respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of recipient countries, abide by international law and the law of host countries, avoid politicizing humanitarian issues and insist on the de-militarization of humanitarian assistance.

Secondly, the fundamental way to address global humanitarian crises lies in the pursuit of peace and the realization of common development. The international community should seize the opportunity offered by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) to scale up support to developing countries, improve their development environment and promote their balanced and sustainable development in the economic, social and environmental spheres. Full consideration should be given to the needs and unique challenges of developing countries in their development efforts, and focus placed on helping them address issues of livelihood, such as eliminating poverty and hunger and improving health. A comprehensive and integrated approach is needed to address both the symptoms and the origins of humanitarian needs in

order to reduce them at the root, and to enhance the capacity for self-development of recipient countries, allowing them to successfully progress from emergency relief to long-term development. During his attendance at the high-level meetings of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, President Xi Jinping of China announced a series of important initiatives, including the establishment of the China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund and the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund. China is ready to work with others and actively contribute to the achievement of common development and the maintenance of peace and stability.

Thirdly, factors such as climate change, food and nutrition insecurity, water shortages and changes in demographic structure have increased the risks of natural disasters and the vulnerability of humankind. At the same time, all types of information and communication technologies have greatly enhanced humankind's capacity to prevent and respond to disasters. However, developing countries still face serious constraints in resources and technological capacity. The international community should, on the basis of full respect for the specific conditions and needs of the recipient countries, help them to effectively strengthen their risk-management capability, build up all-round capacity in disaster prevention, preparedness, reduction and response, and strengthen resilience, including through increasing input, transferring technologies and expertise to developing countries and providing assistance in the construction of infrastructure.

Fourthly, China appreciates the central role played by the United Nations in leading and coordinating international humanitarian assistance, and encourages the United Nations humanitarian system to further improve its institutions, enhance efficiency and transparency, increase the participation of Member States, push to forge synergy among humanitarian assistance efforts at the national, regional and international levels, and take effective measures to better protect the safety and security of humanitarian workers. China calls on donors to further intensify their efforts and provide more funding on flexible terms in response to humanitarian appeals. We share Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's view that humanitarian assistance should not be increased at the expense of resources for development.

The World Humanitarian Summit to be held next May will be an important opportunity for countries to

exchange assistance experience and discuss our future direction in this area. We hope that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs will enhance the participation and ownership of Member States, fully leverage the positive role of the intergovernmental process, and ensure the transparency and predictability of the Summit and its preparatory process so as to ensure its pragmatic outcome.

**Mr. Al-Sabah** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country endorses the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in the discussion of agenda item 73 on strengthening the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance. The important role played by the United Nations in preserving international peace and security, responding to global challenges posed by natural disasters, or in response to the needs of populations affected by conflict calls for enhanced regional and international efforts to strengthen international cooperation and the Organization's capacity to effectively carry out relief and humanitarian projects. In that regard, we recall the central role played by Mr. Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. We commend him for his work and pay tribute to his staff and all those responsible for the administration of emergency relief efforts for the affected populations.

We have carefully read the reports of the Secretary-General before us, and support all the draft resolutions submitted for our consideration today.

The report on the Central Emergency Response Fund (A/70/96) raises very important points that we should take into account by providing the necessary contributions, stepping up the efforts of the international community, and increasing the number of donors. Kuwait is convinced of the importance of the Fund in responding immediately to emergency situations, and believes that it should be bolstered in order to enhance relief efforts. Kuwait is also convinced of the importance of the role played by the United Nations and its specialized agencies and funds in the area of humanitarian assistance and has doubled its voluntary contributions to them.

We reaffirm the importance of participation in the World Humanitarian Summit to be held in Istanbul in May 2016, which will offer States a historical

opportunity to commit to a plan aimed at preserving human dignity in natural disasters and emergencies.

Kuwait is deeply concerned by the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/383) safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel in dangerous circumstances, environments of crisis, armed conflict, instability, extremism and violence. We are well aware of the losses suffered by humanitarian workers because of attacks on United Nations property.

We note the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/76) with regard to the need to strengthen and increase assistance to Palestinian institutions, provide assistance to the Palestinian people, strengthen the Strategic Response Plan and respond to the needs of Palestinians in the occupied territories. The document mentions the unprecedented loss of life and property and the destruction in the occupied Palestinian territories caused by Israeli aggression. We therefore appeal for the realization of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. We also call for earnest work to continue at all levels in order to pressure the occupying Israeli authorities to accept the internationally agreed resolutions and ensure that the Palestinian people are able to enjoy their legitimate rights and be recognized as an independent State on their own territory, with East Jerusalem as their capital.

As a member of the Advisory Commission of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, we reaffirm our full support for these demands and the Agency's objectives, and have responded positively to all of its urgent appeals with regard to its budget. Kuwait reaffirms that it will spare no effort in making its own contributions because we are convinced of the importance of the Agency's work, in accordance with the Charter and the obligations of the United Nations, and in recognition of the important role it plays.

The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development continues its pioneering role by making contributions to developing countries without distinction and with development as its only criterion. Currently, 104 countries receive assistance from the Fund to a total of more than \$10 billion. Since 2013, Kuwait has hosted three international donor conferences to strengthen the humanitarian situation in Syria, which raised \$7 billion in pledges. Kuwait itself pledged \$1.3 billion, most of which is earmarked for the specialized United Nations agencies.

In conclusion, Kuwait participates in relief efforts in Syria in cooperation with the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway and the United Nations, and wishes to strengthen those efforts. We have announced the convening of a fourth international donors conference, to be held on 4 February 2016 in London, in response to the needs of over 5 million displaced people in Syria.

**Mr. Taula** (New Zealand): Over the past year, we have seen a continued escalation in the extraordinary number of people affected by armed conflict and natural disasters around the world. We have seen a continuing disregard for the most basic requirements of international humanitarian law by many State and non-State parties to armed conflict. We have seen the deliberate targeting of civilians and the denial of basic services to populations. We have seen impartial humanitarian organizations continue to be frustrated in their attempts to access populations in desperate need of life-saving help.

We also see the prospect over the coming months of the most severe El Niño climate pattern in recent history. In New Zealand's neighbourhood, a number of Pacific countries are experiencing severe drought conditions, and we potentially face a very active cyclone season over the next few months. This comes on the back of tropical Cyclone Pam — the most severe tropical cyclone recorded in the Pacific in recent times, the impacts of which will be felt by Vanuatu for many years to come. Elsewhere, Ethiopia is facing its worst food shortages in 30 years, and many parts of the world are now experiencing the impact of El Niño. New Zealand is also a disaster-prone country. We remain committed to supporting our Pacific neighbours and those further afield to build resilience, prepare for and, where needed, respond to natural disasters.

Humanitarian needs continue to escalate, outstripping the international community's response. Funding commitments are increasing, but the system is struggling to cope. Things cannot continue as they are. Civilians are suffering, as we see, from Syria to South Sudan. The humanitarian community cannot be expected to substitute for others in providing basic services over years or even decades. More work is needed to find lasting political solutions to these long-standing conflicts. New Zealand has made it clear that the Security Council should do more to prevent conflict. Since joining the Council, we have advocated for a greater focus by the Council and the United Nations system on emerging crises and conflict prevention.

We have reached a critical juncture in deciding how to work together to prevent further conflicts and to respond to the humanitarian emergencies that we currently face. The World Humanitarian Summit will be an important opportunity to make real and positive change. New Zealand welcomes the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator's recent updates on the Summit's process and expected outcomes. Like many others, we look forward to the upcoming report of the Secretary-General report on the Summit, as well as that of the High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing. We also look forward to increasingly close engagement between the United Nations and Member States over the coming months to ensure that all States are in a strong position to contribute to the success of the Summit. In particular, we look forward to the Summit addressing the unique vulnerabilities and strengths of the Pacific and other small island developing States.

**Mr. Lambertini** (Italy): It is a particular privilege for me to give my statement while you, Sir, preside over the General Assembly.

Italy aligns itself with the statement made today by the observer of the European Union and wishes to add some remarks in its national capacity.

At the outset, I would like to commend the efforts of all delegations that have facilitated and negotiated the draft resolutions that will be adopted today. In the light of the magnitude of the humanitarian challenges ahead of us, the resolve and unity of the Assembly and of the international community at large in tackling these issues are of capital importance.

The year 2015 has seen a sharp rise in the number of people living in regions of the world affected by conflicts or extreme fragility, of those forced to seek protection and safe shelter away from their homes, and of women and children in need of international assistance. More crises are affecting more people for longer periods of time. Therefore, the global humanitarian response has increased, reaching unprecedented levels, but it is not enough to match the current needs.

To meet the commitment we made in September in this very Hall to leave no one behind, we must begin by assisting the most vulnerable, placing humanitarian needs at the centre of the international agenda and of our action. Italy has done so in confronting the refugee crisis by making it a priority to save the lives of those who flee conflict and misery by crossing the Mediterranean Sea to seek protection away from their

homes. We will continue to do so in every area of our international engagement.

Putting humanitarian needs at the centre of the agenda also means working to ensure that international humanitarian law is respected; that development cooperation and humanitarian assistance work hand in hand; that assistance is tailored to the local context in an inclusive approach; that women, children and people with disabilities are better protected, and that fragility is replaced by resilience. To achieve that, the humanitarian system must become both more effective and more efficient. We look forward to in-depth discussions on those and other issues that can significantly improve the global humanitarian response capacity in the lead-up to the World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey in May 2016.

It is clear that, ultimately, our efforts must be aimed at tackling the root causes of humanitarian crises, which are all too often driven by armed conflicts and man-made violence. That awareness must increase our resolve to focus on long-term, sustainable solutions, conscious that the cost of inaction is simply more of the same — more people affected by crises, more often and for longer periods of time.

**Mr. Golitsyn** (Ukraine): Throughout the past year, the international community has witnessed an unprecedented scale and complexity of humanitarian crises, together with an ever-increasing need for immediate responses to emergency situations. Such circumstances require accelerated efforts towards a smoother transition from relief to recovery and development, in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and interdependence.

Ukraine highly values the work of United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners towards improving humanitarian response capacities, strengthening the resilience of affected communities and restoring their self-reliance. We emphasize the importance of relevant reports and resolutions that aim to shape a global framework for the delivery of emergency relief. We would like to thank Sweden for facilitating the humanitarian omnibus draft resolution A/70/L.29 under this agenda item.

As a result of the occupation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia and its military aggression in our eastern regions, accompanied by large-scale and protracted displacement, Ukraine has become the recipient of humanitarian aid. We highly appreciate

the Organization's full adherence to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations pertaining to State sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity, which serve as the foundation for United Nations advocacy of the Ukrainian issue.

For its part, Ukraine is doing its utmost to meet the life-saving needs of the population affected. As a result of the hostilities, approximately 1.5 million Ukrainians have been displaced from their homes in Donbas, where the population was originally 5 million. The Ukrainian Government undertakes systematic efforts to ensure that every citizen receives his or her due social benefits. All pensions and social benefits are allocated by the Government to the residents of Donbas. To that effect, a simple special mechanism was established so that all pensions and benefits can be easily obtained in the areas of Ukraine located outside the terrorist-controlled zone. All pensions not received because of hostilities are allocated and available for recipients and can be obtained at any time in future.

Despite significant arrears in payments, Ukraine continues to supply gas and electricity to residents of the militant-controlled areas. Ukraine recognizes the importance of and promotes the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel to affected populations. In situations of armed conflict, parties must allow and facilitate the unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, including cases in which humanitarian operations cross lines of conflict and international borders. Ensuring the adequate protection of civilians and their access to humanitarian assistance should remain priorities for all parties at all times.

We emphasize the serious need to strengthen accountability for grave instances of deliberate delays or denials of access to humanitarian operations. In that regard, I would like to underscore that the Minsk Agreements, in particular provision 7 on ensuring the safe access, delivery, storage and distribution of humanitarian assistance to those in need on the basis of an international mechanism, have not been implemented in full by the Russian side, the so-called Luhansk People's Republic or the Donetsk People's Republic. Despite the Agreements, Russia continues to ignore its commitment to participating in international mechanisms for the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid. From August 2014 to November 2015, Russia sent 46 so-called humanitarian convoys without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities and without

coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross. We also consider the recent attempts of illegal armed groups to refuse access of humanitarian aid to the population in areas of Ukraine beyond Government control to be unacceptable. We rely on the United Nations and international support to ensure that such groups comply with international norms and standards, in particular international humanitarian law.

Ukraine takes seriously the responsibility of Member States to ensure the security of United Nations and humanitarian personnel. We recognize that it is first the responsibility of the host Government. Therefore, we fully support the idea of strengthening deliberations between host Governments and the United Nations on security matters.

Since sustainable humanitarian assistance is heavily dependent on financial support, Ukraine welcomes the achievements of the Central Emergency Response Fund in facilitating assistance to the most vulnerable by providing timely, needs-based funding.

In addition to approving the provision of humanitarian assistance, it is necessary to strengthen the synergies obtained from knowledge-sharing and the replication of best practices. A year from now, Ukraine will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear accident. In cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, serious efforts have been made towards the restoration of affected communities, self-reliance and self-sufficiency based on the development approach. The report of the Secretary-General on optimizing the international effort to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster (A/65/341) emphasizes that this approach must serve as a guide in dealing with similar emergencies in the future.

The solution can be applied and replicated in other nuclear-disaster situations worldwide. In March, affected countries presented this experience at the United Nations conference in Sendai. Post-2016 international Chernobyl cooperation and the relevant draft resolution will undoubtedly include the goal of broader dissemination of knowledge and expertise for the sake of sustainable technological risk management, disaster prevention, response and recovery. We believe that the holding of a thematic meeting of the General Assembly on the thirtieth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster will also serve this purpose. We would like to recall the relevant request to the President of the General Assembly.

While Ukraine shares the view that national authorities have the primary responsibility to provide humanitarian assistance and promote durable solutions to emergency-related issues, the serious humanitarian challenges we have confronted have shown that international cooperation is invaluable in situations that exceed national coping capabilities. Therefore, Ukraine calls for continued and enhanced international support, upon request, for the capacity-building efforts of States. To maximize efficiency, humanitarian assistance should address not only the needs, but also the factors that contribute to vulnerability. Through conducive and equitable international assistance and with full understanding of local conditions and the unique dynamics of humanitarian crises, we will be able to achieve crucial development objectives and empower local communities to become self-sufficient.

**Mr. Çevik (Turkey):** At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the humanitarian activities of the United Nations system. We would also like to commend the efforts of the United Nations humanitarian agencies for their life-saving work, as well as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, whose role in ensuring effective coordination in the delivery of humanitarian assistance remains essential.

The global humanitarian system has made considerable progress throughout history, to the common benefit of people in need. Yet, it is undeniable that today the international community is facing tremendous challenges in the humanitarian field. As Under-Secretary-General Stephen O'Brien highlighted in Geneva this week, human suffering has reached levels not seen since the Second World War. More than 125 million people will need humanitarian assistance to survive in 2016.

Turkey shares the view that the current international humanitarian system can no longer adequately address the increasing dimensions and complexities of today's humanitarian crises, the great majority of which are conflict-related. As the most recent tragic exodus of migrants and refugees has bitterly reminded the international community, humanitarian crises increasingly transcend borders. It is our moral obligation to help those in dire need. Joining in such efforts is also the common responsibility of each and every member of this organ. With its \$2.5 billion of official development aid and \$1.6 billion of overseas humanitarian assistance, Turkey, the third-largest



humanitarian donor in the world, shoulders a formidable task in our common responsibility.

Yet, there is a need for many more emerging donors and ever-increasing support from traditional donors to cope with the rapidly increasing demand. Thus, the World Humanitarian Summit, convened by the Secretary-General and to be held in Istanbul on 23 and 24 May 2016, will be very timely. As the host country, we are fully engaged and committed to making the Summit a real success. Over the course of the past few years, the multi-stakeholder summit process has achieved a lot. We will continue to support the Secretariat on the road to Istanbul. Summit outcomes jointly endorsed by all humanitarian actors should clearly set the future agenda for the international community, while identifying the issues to be followed up. In this respect, we would like to underline some of the ideas that we think are of particular importance.

First, given the complexity of the present crises, the humanitarian-development nexus needs to be strengthened. International assistance has to be seen as a long-term investment in our collective security, peace and prosperity. Part of this effort should include a shift towards a more development- and resilience-oriented approach. Turkey's approach in Somalia, Afghanistan and sub-Saharan Africa has been based on this understanding, to the best of its means.

The second issue is related to how to best and most effectively use our limited resources. While the global humanitarian system is running out of funds, the people affected are running out of time. We believe that well-defined models and modalities are needed to ensure better coordination not only among the relevant United Nations bodies operating in the field, but also between them and all other stakeholders. In achieving this, affected communities must be at the core of humanitarian action. Localized response ensures that needs are defined more accurately and that local economies and structures are also utilized and reinforced. In the same vein, ensuring financial support is equally crucial. In the run-up to the Summit, we should continue to focus on new humanitarian financing modalities at the global level. We therefore look forward to seeing the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing feed into the Summit discussions.

Thirdly, the tragic waves of refugees are a fact we can no longer neglect or ignore. Humanitarian crises triggered by conflicts have serious impacts not only

on the country of origin, but also on neighbouring countries and beyond. It is high time that global actions on refugee issues be considered at the Summit, with particular emphasis on assisting refugees and their host countries. In this vein, the recent plenary meeting of the General Assembly held under agenda item 130, on 20 November 2015 (see A/70/PV.59), was useful. We welcome the intention of the Secretary-General to convene a summit in September 2016.

Providing medical aid in conflict zones, addressing the needs of women and children and other vulnerable groups and protecting victims is crucial to saving lives, but we must also think about how to safeguard the education and livelihoods of those who survive.

In the face of the surge in forced displacement and protracted conflicts around us, we are all confronted with difficult choices to help those in need of protection. As a neighbour of Syria, Turkey feels the multiple effects of the tragedy in that country deeply. Despite all the challenges involved, we have continued to pursue an open-door policy for Syrians and Iraqis without any discrimination. We have also continued our assistance in other humanitarian emergencies across a wide geographic area that includes Iraq, Myanmar, Somalia, Nepal, Ukraine, Yemen and South Sudan, among others. Our common objective is a simple one — to better respond to humanitarian crises in order to save lives and thereby to save humankind.

In conclusion, we call on all Member States and stakeholders to support the World Humanitarian Summit process and to participate in the Summit at the highest level, in demonstration of our global ownership and responsibility to humankind.

**Ms. Faizunnesa** (Bangladesh): Today we are at a crossroads of significant timelines. Only two months ago in this very Hall, our global leaders adopted the historic 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which seeks to address the needs of the most vulnerable and to leave no one behind; and just four months from now the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit will take place. It is ironic that at this moment the world is seeing the largest number of people displaced as a result of conflict since the Second World War, alongside huge numbers displaced owing to the scourges of climate change and environmental degradation and adding up to 120 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance and at least 60 million who have been forced to flee their homes or countries. The mass movements of refugees and

mass migrations have brought unprecedented human mobility. But these are not just numbers. They represent the intense suffering of children, women and men. All refugees deserve safety and every migrant has a right to dignity.

This unquestionably represents an extraordinarily complex problem for the humanitarian area, demanding the international community's urgent attention and rendering the first World Humanitarian Summit even more relevant and significant. Trust-building and ownership are the two key practical tools required for effective humanitarian assistance, and we hope the upcoming Summit will be inclusive and capable of mobilizing strong political will to that end.

A paradigm shift from a position of emergency response to one of preparedness and resilience-building is imperative, and my country strongly supports it. Bangladesh has dealt with many natural disasters and has learned how to be resilient through the use of appropriate tools, techniques and innovation. We have mainstreamed disaster risk reduction into public policies, development plans and programmes for building a resilient nation and resilient communities. We strongly believe that an understanding of the context of the countries involved and their affected communities is a crucial factor that must be taken into consideration if an effective humanitarian response is to be achieved.

It is essential to properly consider the root causes that can have an adverse impact on the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. Development is the preventive prescription for many crises, including those resulting from people's displacement. Poverty, underdevelopment and inequality should be addressed in a holistic manner in order to build resilience and reduce dependency on humanitarian aid. Against that backdrop, it is vital to ensure that the United Nations system and the international community work in a concerted manner with Member States in order to further strengthen cooperation and coordination among all humanitarian actors, so that humanitarian responses can be neutral, timely, faster, more effective and better targeted.

I would like to emphasize the unflinching commitment of and contribution that Bangladesh has made to the humanitarian field. In that regard, we have maintained our position for almost a decade as one of the leading troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping missions. Bangladesh has sent medical teams to many countries hit by natural

disasters in their immediate aftermath, most recently to our neighbour Nepal after the devastating earthquake there, when we opened all of our air- and seaports in order to facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance. It is worth mentioning that Bangladesh deployed an all-female police contingent to Haiti in 2010; in 2012 they received a United Nations Medal for their contribution to managing law enforcement in Haiti. Bangladesh stands ready to share its best practices in the area of disaster risk reduction and resilience-building.

A key objective for all of us is linking humanitarian work to prevention, resilience and development. We simply have to be more resilient to shocks. We need more humanitarian financing. However, redirecting critical funding away from development aid at this pivotal time could help to perpetuate the challenges that the global community has committed to addressing through the 2030 Agenda. My delegation particularly appreciates the Secretary-General's appeals to the international community to meet that immense challenge without lessening its commitment to vitally needed official development assistance. Resources for one area should not come at another's expense, and helping people in need should not be a zero-sum game. We are very much looking forward to the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing.

There has been an unprecedented increase in attacks on humanitarian personnel and peacekeepers. We firmly condemn any kind of attack on any humanitarian personnel, and each and every worker engaged in performing such noble duties should be protected. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his informative reports on the subject, and my delegation is also appreciative of and would like to commend the Group of 77 and China, the European Union and Sweden for their able facilitation of the relevant draft resolutions. We hope that those draft resolutions, to be adopted today, will contribute to a coordinated international humanitarian response that can effectively address the needs of the people affected around the world by humanitarian emergencies.

**Mr. Grant (Canada)** (*spoke in French*): The United Nations consolidated appeal, *Global Humanitarian Overview 2016*, was released on Monday. As Stephen O'Brien, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, has emphasized, the overall picture is extremely bleak. We need \$20.1 billion, more than 87 million people require assistance, and we are grappling with a population displacement crisis of extraordinary proportions.

While over the past 10 years we have sadly become accustomed to dreadful records, today's humanitarian challenges are staggering.

Despite some extraordinary efforts, the international community is a long way from a sufficient response to this year's humanitarian needs. If we hope at some point to alleviate the suffering around the world, it is essential that we put a halt to the number of armed conflicts in which civilian populations have been subjected to horrifying violence. We reiterate that rules exist even in time of war, and they are crucial to protecting civilians and humanitarian responders. Those rules must be respected by all parties to every armed conflict. The Member States represented in this Hall have the power to demand political solutions, accountability and respect for the rules, and they can use their power to help end such conflicts.

But that is not all. The world is also grappling with an increasing number of increasingly severe weather events, including storms, floods and droughts. Canada believes firmly that we must act decisively on climate change. Fragile and conflict-affected States are often the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, since by overburdening already weak institutions those effects increase States' vulnerability in a vicious circle. We must therefore focus on reducing the instability and human tragedy produced by climate change by reducing risks and promoting resilience. To achieve that we must be prepared to intervene quickly in order to respond to predictable risks such as the El Niño phenomenon, whose effects are already being felt in many parts of the world.

It is imperative that Member States meet the challenges of these situations and support international humanitarian interventions. States that aspire to influence on a global scale must increase their contributions, because meeting current humanitarian needs requires greater and more widespread participation. In that regard, we are all collectively responsible for preventing and reducing such vast and totally unacceptable human suffering.

*(spoke in English)*

This year's draft humanitarian resolutions better reflect that reality. There are more references to protracted emergencies and displacement and to the need to better address such situations with concerted efforts and a combination of both humanitarian and

development tools. Canada is very pleased that all of this year's draft resolutions firmly recognize the importance of women's and girls' equal participation in all stages of decision-making, because that is the best possible way to ensure that people's most urgent needs are met and that the road to recovery is peaceful, equitable and inclusive. In that regard, we also welcome the inclusion for the first time of a paragraph specifically dedicated to strengthening support services for children, boys as well as girls, who we know are among the most vulnerable populations affected by humanitarian emergencies but whose needs and concerns are rarely sufficiently appreciated or addressed.

We are also very pleased with the recognition of the need to improve accountability at all levels for the needs of affected populations. Committing to meeting the expressed needs of those affected is real progress, and we hope and expect that those improvements will result in increased attention on the ground. We are nonetheless dismayed that many Member States seem unwilling to confront the most pressing challenges, including obstacles to humanitarian access and a pervasive lack of compliance with international humanitarian law. While we still believe that consensus is the best way to advance humanitarian norms, we clearly have a long way to go to make humankind, and the safety and dignity of those affected, our central humanitarian concerns.

It is in that spirit that we welcome the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit as an opportunity to reinspire humanitarian action, concretely address our most significant challenges and commit to making needed changes. Canada supports the emphasis that has been placed on addressing protracted crises and displacement and the need to do a better job of linking humanitarian and development programming. We must reaffirm the importance of humanitarian principles, address the needs and concerns of vulnerable people, including women and children, and reinforce the centrality of protecting all vulnerable populations from the direct and indirect impacts of natural disasters and armed conflicts.

We thank the Secretary-General and the Emergency Relief Coordinator for their efforts to bring all stakeholders to the Summit. Canada stands ready to engage, and we share the belief that these issues are not the remit of Member States alone. It is for the people and States affected, the donors, humanitarian responders

and others to bring their individual perspectives and capacities to bear. We look forward to the Summit and urge fellow Member States to seize this opportunity.

**Mr. Suh** (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its continued support for the United Nations system and all humanitarian organizations in their tireless efforts to save lives and reduce human suffering.

This year we witnessed deteriorating humanitarian crises all over the world. In particular, refugees fleeing armed conflict and structural and chronic poverty have created new challenges for European countries as well as the rest of the world. A series of natural disasters resulting from worsening climate change have jeopardized the safety and security of vast numbers of people. We must therefore forge a durable solution if we are to address the resulting unprecedented humanitarian challenges, or we simply will not be able to guarantee human dignity and peaceful societies, one of the key elements of the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted here just a few months ago.

Aware of how urgent it is that we respond to today's humanitarian crises, the Korean Government has made humanitarianism and humanitarian action one of its top foreign-policy priorities. This year, the Republic of Korea directed a large part of its overall humanitarian assistance to level-3 emergencies in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Yemen, with the aim of helping to alleviate the tremendous human suffering in those countries. We have also supported countries stricken by serious natural disasters. In response to the earthquake in Nepal, the Korean Government had a disaster relief team on the spot within 48 hours and committed \$10 million with the aim of aligning humanitarian assistance with rehabilitation and development. Korea also sent a disaster relief team to the areas of Africa affected by Ebola in order to help to deal with that serious infectious disease, a new kind of humanitarian challenge.

The total amount of the United Nations global humanitarian appeal is increasing every year as the number of people in need of it grows. According to the *Global Humanitarian Overview 2016* just released by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, next year's appeal is seeking more than \$20 billion for more than 87 million people across 37 countries. Faced with humanitarian tasks of such magnitude, various humanitarian actors from Governments, non-governmental organizations

and United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations are working together closely in the field under the leadership of the United Nations. We count on the Organization to provide effective and strengthened coordination of humanitarian assistance.

In that regard, I would like to highlight a few points regarding ongoing humanitarian actions that my Government feels are important. First, we must give greater priority to assisting highly vulnerable people such as women, children and refugees. The Better Life for Girls initiative recently announced by Korea's President, Park Geun-Hye, is a notable effort in that regard. We also believe that new technologies and innovation should play an essential part in providing a quality education for girls and boys in humanitarian emergencies.

Secondly, better alignment between humanitarian and development assistance is imperative if we are to avoid recurring crises by building resilience at the national and local level. Long-term approaches, such as complementary humanitarian and development programming, will also contribute to a smoother transition from relief to development and an efficient use of limited humanitarian and development resources.

Last but not least, only five months are left as we prepare for the first world humanitarian summit in Istanbul. While the Republic of Korea welcomes the ongoing preparatory process, including the regional and global dialogues, it encourages the United Nations humanitarian system to further engage Member States and stakeholders so that the historical summit can be a genuine milestone to reinspire and reinvigorate global humanitarianism. My country will do its part to ensure that the first world humanitarian summit is a success.

Let me conclude by welcoming the tenth anniversary of the Central Emergency Response Fund and noting its remarkable achievement in providing timely, life-saving assistance. The Republic of Korea remains committed to working with all humanitarian actors and pledges to maintain its solidarity with people in need of moving forward.

**Mrs. Byaje** (Rwanda): At the outset, Rwanda thanks President Lykketoft for convening this important meeting. My intervention will focus on the assistance to the survivors of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi.

As members are aware, each year in April, the international community joins the Rwandan people in remembering the tragic events that took place 21 years

ago during one of the most horrible genocides of our times, which claimed more than 1 million innocent lives in a span of 100 days while the entire was helplessly and indecisively watching.

During the past 21 years, Rwandans, in particular survivors, have continued to make tremendous strides in reconstructing their lives. However, due to the extent to which the discord has affected them, healing from that post-traumatic state is an ongoing process. Despite the Government of Rwanda's allocation of 5 per cent of the budget to the pressing needs of genocide survivors through the Government's assistance fund for survivors. The fund is suffering major critical challenges linked to the daunting task of rebuilding the lives of genocide survivors. Those include the following: the support previously provided by the Government of Rwanda to the genocide survivors is under review to be mainstreamed into the new national social protection strategy, which will prioritize survivors, alongside a number of other vulnerable groups, in providing such support, including housing, health care, education and welfare support.

As the events of the genocide become more distant, the challenge to raise funds to support the survivors becomes even more difficult with the expectation that the population has begun to overcome the immediate consequences of the event that they endured. The utmost challenge for young survivors of the genocide, many of whom are orphans, is to secure sustainable employment to provide for themselves, as the majority of them

are heads of their households. Finally, the increasing needs of genocide survivors, especially disabled and elderly people, particularly women, who are the most vulnerable despite the Government's use of its limited resources, must be met.

In this context, we particularly encourage future focus on vulnerable groups, such as orphans, widows and those who have experienced physical injuries resulting in mental and/or physical disabilities, as well as ageing genocide survivors. We support the approach of supporting those groups through sustainable enterprises and other income-generation activities through capacity-building, microcredits and access to markets in order to promote self-sufficiency and self-reliance and enable them to become more resilient to external shocks.

We looking to the Secretary-General's status report on this issue, which will give us an update on the current challenges to the delivery of relief and rehabilitation assistance by the United Nations and its partners to the survivors of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and its recommendation for appropriate ways to meet their pressing needs.

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to call upon Member States and the entire international community to recommit to the promise of "never again" in the prevention and fight against genocide throughout the world.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*