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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 46th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 8 November 2016, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Mejía Vélez ..... (Colombia)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

### **Agenda item 27: Advancement of women**

*Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.15: Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation*

1. **Ms. Soulama** (Burkina Faso), introducing the draft resolution and speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the elimination of female genital mutilation was firmly enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In particular, Goal 5.3 addressed harmful practices, which were clearly stated as obstacles to gender equality and women's empowerment. The elimination of violence against women and girls, including harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, would contribute not only to the attainment of Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda, but to all the Sustainable Development Goals, due to the cross-cutting nature of gender. The draft resolution underlined the need for a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to the elimination of the practice, as well as the need for improved data collection and a renewed focus on specific programmes and additional resources aimed at eliminating it. The report of the Secretary-General (A/69/211) contained concrete recommendations on actions that should be taken at the national, regional and international levels in order to eliminate female genital mutilation, and those had been taken into account in the draft resolution.

2. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Antigua and Barbuda, China, Lebanon, Palau and Vietnam had joined the sponsors.

### **Agenda item 68: Promotion and protection of human rights**

#### **(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms**

*Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.22: Human rights and extreme poverty*

3. **Mr. Tenya Hasegawa** (Peru) said that widespread extreme poverty restricted enjoyment of human rights and weakened democracy and inclusivity. In the draft resolution, Governments recognized that poverty in all its forms was the most significant

challenge facing the world, and that its eradication was necessary for sustainable development. Eliminating poverty and promoting and protecting the human rights of everyone, without exception, would contribute to the achievement of a sustainable development model, which would benefit both present and future generations.

4. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Haiti, Honduras, Mongolia, Paraguay and Timor Leste had joined the sponsors.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.27: Moratorium on the use of the death penalty*

5. **Mr. Sukhee** (Mongolia), introducing the draft resolution, said that its text included an increased emphasis on the importance of national and regional debates on abandoning the death penalty and the sharing of experiences by States that were successfully maintaining a moratorium, along with mention of the right to recourse to pardons and clemency procedures.

6. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Fiji, Haiti, Mozambique, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Togo had joined the sponsors.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.29: Declaration on the Right to Peace*

7. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba) said that the current draft resolution responded to the recommendation contained in Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/RES/32/28, and was a means of raising awareness of the various components of the right to peace. Although the road to peace was rough, all actions that promoted and protected peace would encourage cooperation, solidarity and respectful dialogue, and the casting aside of political, economic, social, religious, cultural or traditional differences. The Declaration on the Right to Peace was a first, important step in the process of identifying common challenges and good practices. It would contribute to the peaceful coexistence of nations, and would send a strong message of commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights to peace and life.

8. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Belarus, Cameroon, the Central African Republic,

China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, South Africa, Togo and Zimbabwe had joined the sponsors.

**Agenda item 68: Promotion and protection of human rights** (*continued*)

**(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives** (*continued*)

*Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.24: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic*

9. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar), introducing the draft resolution, said that the sponsors had consulted widely with Member States and had prepared a draft resolution that was balanced and objective and an accurate portrayal of the conflict. It drew extensively on the language used in previous resolutions and retained much of their content. However, it also reflected recent developments, such as the recent escalation of attacks against civilians in Aleppo and other besieged areas, and the horrific attack on a United Nations aid convoy in September 2016. The draft resolution welcomed the reports of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism of August and October 2016, which determined that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) were responsible for the use of chemical weapons. It called for a restoration of the cessation of hostilities and demanded that all parties, most notably the Syrian regime, cease their attacks against civilians. It also addressed the dire humanitarian situation and the global impact of the Syrian crisis, including the refugee crisis.

10. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Belgium, Comoros, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mauritania, Netherlands, Oman, Somalia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Yemen had joined the sponsors. The French version of the draft resolution would be reissued for technical reasons.

11. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the draft resolution contained numerous inaccuracies, fallacies and lies, underscored the political bankruptcy of the Al Saud regime and its allies and revealed that regime's deep sense of inferiority towards Syria and its people. Furthermore,

the Saudi aggression against Yemen and Syria had made clear that those who sponsored violence would eventually be consumed from within by the violence they had unleashed. How had it been possible for Saudi Arabia, a country that still refused to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to sponsor a draft resolution against Syria, a State Party to that Convention since 1969? How had it been possible for Saudi Arabia to purchase a seat for itself on the Human Rights Council?

12. His delegation deeply regretted the repeated attempts by certain delegations to use the Third Committee to further their interventionist and narrow political agendas, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. The tabling of a draft resolution on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic was deeply ironic, given the appalling human rights record of the Saudi regime, which was the very last authority that should be allowed to lecture the United Nations on human rights issues. Indeed, it was inconceivable that the Saudi regime would ever comply with the recently adopted United States Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, particularly when there was irrefutable proof that that regime had conspired with Al-Qaida terrorists to perpetrate the terrorist attacks in the United States of America on 11 September 2001.

13. The entire world was aware that the Saudi regime was the most important supporter and financier of armed takfiri terrorist groups — groups that continued to perpetrate heinous human rights abuses throughout the world. Saudi terrorism was a long-established phenomenon and the dark hand of the Saudi regime was behind terrorist attacks across the globe, including attacks in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, France and Belgium. It even sponsored terrorism in the east and south of Saudi Arabia itself. Indeed, in confidential emails obtained by Wikileaks, United States presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and United States Vice President Joe Biden had both stated unambiguously that the ruling regimes in Saudi Arabia and Qatar and their allies were providing financial and logistical support to terrorist groups in Syria. Furthermore, customer receipts and photographs had provided unequivocal proof that approximately 6,000 vehicles that had been purchased from the Toyota automobile company by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan had been transferred

by those countries to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorists in Syria.

14. It was, moreover, impossible to turn a blind eye to the morally reprehensible way in which the Saudi regime had blackmailed the Secretary-General into removing the Saudi Arabia-led coalition from the list of parties in Yemen that, inter alia, killed or maimed children or engaged in attacks on schools and hospitals from the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/70/836) – it was, in fact, well known that Saudi Arabia had threatened to cut off all its financial support for United Nations agencies, including, in particular, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) unless the Secretary-General agreed to remove the coalition from that list.

15. The despotic and racist Al Saud regime continued to deny the Saudi people their most basic rights and had seized the great wealth of Saudi Arabia for its own exclusive use. Indeed, the Saudi economist Hamza Salim had recently shocked Saudi Arabian society by drawing attention to the fact that one trillion Saudi riyals had disappeared from the Saudi treasury in 2015 and 2016; there was no doubt that that immense sum had been stolen by members of the Al Saud regime.

16. Saudi Arabia was an oppressive police State whose rulers used Wahhabist ideology to propagate a cult of subservience and intimidate the population into submission. All those who dared to voice any criticism of the Saudi regime's egregious human rights violations faced imprisonment; prominent critics who had ended up behind bars had included the senior members of the Saudi Civil and Political and Rights Association Abdullah al-Hamid and Muhammad al-Qahtani. Similarly, members of the Saudi Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights had languished in prison since 1993 for daring to call for judicial reform, the release of political prisoners and an end to the use of preventative detention. The Saudi authorities had also used overwhelming force and violence against prisoners protesting their conditions, and had even arrested hundreds of women for protesting the abominable conditions in which their imprisoned family members were being held.

17. Meanwhile, in Qatar, a country with no Constitution or democratic institutions that denied its citizens their fundamental right to vote, the Qatari poet

Mohammad al-Ajami had been sentenced to life imprisonment for daring to speak out against the restrictions imposed on the population by the Qatari regime. The ruling Al Thani regime's sponsorship of takfiri terrorist groups was, moreover, well known, and the Lutfallah 2 vessel incident had provided ample evidence that the regime was sending arms and materiel to terrorists in Syria through a Lebanese port.

18. In closing he cautioned Member States not to fall for the Saudi-Qatari ideological perversion, which contravened the principled position of the Non-Aligned Movement of rejecting all country-specific resolutions on human rights situations.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.25\*: Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran*

19. **Mr. Blanchard** (Canada) said that Canada was introducing the draft resolution again in 2016 to reiterate the serious concerns of the international community regarding the human rights record of Iran and to support improvement. The draft resolution did not seek to point fingers, but rather to engage meaningfully with Iran by identifying areas of concern and steps that Iran could take to meet its human rights obligations.

20. Multiple consultations, including with countries that had traditionally opposed the resolution and with Iran itself, had resulted in a more robust resolution that welcomed progress, yet did not shy away from highlighting concerns. The text reflected positive developments, including the participation of Iran in the universal periodic review, its increasing contact with the Special Rapporteur, and its readiness for bilateral dialogue on human rights, but also outlined serious concerns on many issues, such as the death sentences handed down after deeply flawed trials; an alarmingly high rate of executions; ongoing discrimination against women and ethnic and religious minorities; and the continued disregard for due process and fair trials.

21. No country, including Canada, had a perfect human rights record. However, it was important to acknowledge and address shortcomings diligently, openly and meaningfully, which was what the draft resolution was seeking from Iran.

22. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had joined the sponsors.

23. **Mr. Dehghani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the insincere introduction of the draft resolution by Canada would only deepen the mistrust between the two sides. The worst atrocities in recent history were being committed by the closest allies of Canada and other sponsors of the draft resolution. Iran was clearly being singled out in the Middle East region because it did not yield to political pressure. It was unfortunate that the Third Committee was once again being dragged into a deeply biased and politicized decision that further eroded the credibility of the United Nations.

24. It was high time that Canada desisted from such futile action and dealt with its own long-standing human rights issues, such as the systemic and historic violations of the rights of its indigenous peoples. Regrettably, Canada had shown no sincere willingness to engage meaningfully in addressing the flaws in the resolution, contrary to what the representative of Canada had just said.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/71/SR.26: Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)*

25. **Mr. Yelchenko** (Ukraine), introducing the draft resolution, said that the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol had been occupied by the Russian Federation since February 2014. According to the reports of the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, the human rights situation on the peninsula had deteriorated sharply since the occupation had begun. Serious violations had been reported, including extrajudicial killings, abductions, enforced disappearances, discrimination, violence and arbitrary detention. The Russian Federation had denied representatives of international human rights mechanisms access to the peninsula.

26. The main goal of the draft resolution was to urge the Russian Federation to comply fully with its obligations as an occupying Power and to allow international human rights mechanisms to access the peninsula and to report on the situation in accordance with their mandate. It also aimed to give a voice to the 2.5 million people in Crimea who were suffering under

an authoritarian regime. The draft resolution could not be considered to be “country-specific”, since it did not target the territory of the third country, only the territory of Ukraine.

27. Lastly, he was surprised that that the Secretariat had prevented his delegation from circulating a concept note relating to the draft resolution. Interested delegations were invited to pick up a copy of the note from the document stand at the side of the meeting room.

28. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Albania, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malta, Montenegro, Norway and Republic of Moldova had joined the sponsors. With regard to the circulation of ancillary documents in the meeting room, he said that the Secretariat decided which non-official documents could be distributed and it was customary to distribute only statements and occasionally official United Nations publications. However, delegations were welcome to leave material they wished to bring to the attention of other delegations on the tables at the sides of the room.

29. **Mr. Zagaynov** (Russian Federation) said that delegations should vote against the country-specific draft resolution. It was misleading and not within the remit of the Third Committee to include provisions on the international legal status of a specific territory. The document itself was one-sided and failed to mention the negative consequences of the Ukrainian authorities’ actions on inhabitants of Crimea: Ukraine had blocked access to the peninsula by sea, causing untold damage to local farmers and the ecosystem; an embargo had been placed on trade between Ukraine and Crimea; unknown assailants had blown up four transmission towers, leaving local inhabitants without heat and electricity during the cold weather; locals had suffered the effects of decisions by the Ukrainian Government to limit access to banking services; and, in a case of flagrant discrimination, European Union countries had refused to issue visas to Russian citizens in Crimea, clearly to punish them for choosing to side with the Russian Federation. The draft resolution also ignored serious human rights violations and war crimes committed by the Ukrainian authorities, some of which had been recorded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), including unlawful detention, torture, the inhuman



treatment and sexual assault of prisoners, abduction, enforced disappearance, politically motivated persecution, threats and arbitrary arrest. The Office had expressed concern about the slow progress of investigations into acts committed by the Ukrainian military and security forces following reports by the OHCHR Mission. The authors of the draft resolution had welcomed those fact-finding reports, implying that they agreed with the information contained therein.

30. The Ukrainian delegation claimed that its goal was to guarantee monitoring of the human rights situation in Crimea and access to the region, but that appeared to be a pretext for avoiding further monitoring in Ukraine as a whole. The draft resolution had not referred to a recent report by a Council of Europe delegation to Crimea, which had noted that the delegation had not been prevented from meeting numerous representatives of civil society, religious groups, national minorities and the media, perhaps because the authors deemed it insufficiently anti-Russian. They had instead opted for set opinions by people who had not visited the region. The increased monitoring and access was not motivated by a concern for the people of Crimea, but intended as a smear campaign against the Russian Federation and an attempt to ratchet up the pressure on it.

31. In reality, Russian legislation and international treaties were applied throughout Crimea and inhabitants enjoyed all legal remedies guaranteed under Russian law. Specific measures were also taken to promote the political, social and spiritual revival of the peoples there, who had been subjected to unlawful deportation and political repression in the 1940s.

32. The draft resolution was purely political and its adoption would further undermine trust in the Third Committee and indicate how confrontational and politicized it had become. He encouraged Member States not to succumb to the pressure of sponsors of Ukraine, but to consider the document objectively. Goading the Ukrainian authorities into more hateful rhetoric against everything Russian and increasing their confidence in their impunity would entrench their belief that they could get away with anything and deepen their resolve not to seek a resolution to the conflict in Ukraine along the lines of the Minsk Agreements.

33. **Mr. Yelchenko** (Ukraine) said that it was not the first time that the delegation of the Russian Federation had put forward ridiculous arguments. It appeared that since March 2014 the Russian delegation had been living in a kind of twisted parallel reality. If affairs in Crimea were as rosy as the Russian representative had claimed then there should be no problem in opening the peninsula to the international monitoring mechanisms, as his Government proposed in the draft resolution.

34. The last two paragraphs of General Assembly resolution [68/262](#) of March 2014, on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, clearly indicated that the referendum which the Government of the Russian Federation had used to legitimize its attempt to annex Crimea had no validity.

**Agenda item 63: Report of the Human Rights Council** (*continued*) ([A/71/53](#), [A/71/53/Add.1](#) and [A/71/53/Add.2](#))

35. **Ms. Scott** (Namibia) said that the Human Rights Council should prioritize the southern African region, and especially her country, when deciding which Member States would receive visits to strengthen their capacity to meet the requirements of the treaty body reporting process. For momentum to be maintained, her Government required assistance to reinforce its existing inter-ministerial reporting and follow-up structures, which would include the development of monitoring databases.

36. **Mr. Al-Hussaini** (Iraq) said that, as part of its institution-building efforts, the Iraqi Government was striving to entrench democratic and human rights principles and believed that upholding and monitoring respect for human rights could advance the peaceful development of society. Iraq had amended its national legislation to align it with the international conventions to which it was a party and was carefully monitoring implementation of those instruments. Iraq also made every effort to submit its national reports to relevant human rights authorities in a timely manner.

37. The fight against terrorism was a key priority for his country; his delegation remained confident that the military campaign being conducted by the army and police in coordination with the Peshmerga, the popular mobilization forces and tribal fighters, would end with the defeat of the terrorist organization ISIL — an

organization that continued to perpetrate the most brutal crimes against civilians, including the forcible recruitment of children into its ranks, the use of unarmed civilians as human shields, and the execution of civilians attempting to flee conflict areas.

38. Terrorism was a truly global challenge that posed a threat to all societies. Indeed, at the international level, variously-named terrorist organizations had struck numerous developed and developing countries: a coordinated response was therefore urgently needed to address the scourge of terrorism, and Member States must redouble their efforts to eradicate all terrorist activity. Only when terrorism was defeated could global peace and stability be re-established. The eradication of terrorism was, moreover, an essential prerequisite for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

39. **Mr. Ruiz Blanco** (Colombia) said that it was necessary to continue to reduce both the number of resolutions the Human Rights Council adopted and the number of issues it considered. Doing so would strengthen the implementation of and the follow-up to human rights recommendations, as well as meaning that more attention could be devoted to the items on the agenda and that the best use could be made of existing capacity, both at the national and United Nations levels. Among the actions that the Council should prioritize were any measures to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which Member States had pledged to leave no one behind.

40. Controversy was an inherent part of multilateral dialogue in any forum, and the Human Rights Council was no exception. Differences should not be feared but seen as opportunities for critical, constructive debate, which would facilitate the gradual achievement of consensus on the basis of respect and recognition of the importance of promoting the human rights of all. On the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Council, Members were urged to avoid polarization, continue deepening dialogue and cooperation, and strengthen the Council so that it could make advances in the defence, protection and promotion of human rights for all.

41. **Mr. Zhemenev** (Kazakhstan) said that the tenth anniversary of the Human Rights Council had taken place at a time of heightened international tension and instability, violent armed conflict, grave humanitarian

crises and multiple terrorist attacks, and those issues had been high on the Council's agenda throughout 2016. The Council had held a record number of meetings in 2016 and there had been an increase of almost 10 per cent in the number of texts adopted as compared with 2015.

42. However, Kazakhstan regretted the growing polarization in the work of the Council in recent years, as attested by the increased number of resolutions and amendments put to a vote. Kazakhstan was of the view that the universal periodic review was the only mechanism of the Council that was supported by all United Nations Member States. While Kazakhstan supported the special procedures mechanism, it stressed that mandate holders, when visiting particular countries and assessing the situation on the ground, needed to seek out diverse sources of information. Kazakhstan furthermore believed that any efforts to rationalize the Council's agenda and improve its working methods should be State-led and voluntary, and that substantive changes in its work should take place only within the review procedure planned in accordance with its institution-building package.

43. **Mr. Habib** (Indonesia) said that the work of the Council should be guided by the principles of impartiality, equality and constructive dialogue, and polarization and politicization should be avoided. Indonesia called on the Office of the High Commissioner to re-evaluate its working methods and its monitoring mechanisms before undertaking assessment of States. The promotion and protection of human rights could only be achieved through mutual respect and cooperation, particularly around issues that were not universally or internationally recognized or around diverging socio-cultural or religious norms and values.

44. Indonesia was preparing for a visit from the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health during the first quarter of 2017 as well as a visit from the Special Rapporteur on the right to food in the second half of 2017. Indonesia was also due for its review at the first session of the third cycle of the universal periodic review in May 2017, and it believed that the universal public review mechanism would continue to serve as the most useful

platform for assessing human rights issues in all countries on an equal basis.

45. **Ms. Mxakato-Diseko** (South Africa) said that constructive dialogue and international cooperation greatly assisted States in fulfilling their human rights obligations. It was worrisome, therefore, that despite the provisions of paragraph 32 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Council did not consistently take a universal, objective and non-selective approach to the selection of human rights issues for consideration. In addition, the Council's failure to adhere to the institution-building text and the outcome of the Human Rights Council review was threatening its credibility and increasing polarization and politicization in its work.

46. As stated in paragraph 25 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, on the relationship between widespread extreme poverty and the full and effective enjoyment of human rights, urgent action was necessary to deepen knowledge of extreme poverty and its causes. The poorly defined notion of "a human rights- based approach" was troubling, because it seemed to be based on a hierarchy of rights according to which socioeconomic and cultural rights were not important.

47. Her Government's engagement with the Council was guided by the principle of non-discrimination. In its ongoing work with the Council, South Africa would prioritize the following four initiatives: the elaboration of complementary standards to the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the elaboration of an international legally binding framework to regulate the activities of private military and security companies, the rectification of the legal status of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the elaboration of a legally binding normative framework on human rights for transnational corporations and other business enterprises.

48. **Mr. Idris** (Eritrea), recalling that the Human Rights Council had been established partly to eliminate the political manipulation and double standards that had characterized the defunct United Nations Commission on Human Rights, said that its success depended on its adherence to the principles of impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity and non-politicization. However, certain States insisted on

naming and shaming other States and sought to impose their own values through the politicized and confrontational practice of tabling country-specific resolutions. Human rights were universal, indivisible and interdependent. The Council should thus deal with all human rights concerns equally, and should accord equal importance to the rights protected by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and those protected by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

49. The Council was overburdened due to the ever-increasing number of new initiatives; the proliferation of special procedures and commissions of inquiry added extra strain. His Government continued to advocate for funding for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to come from the regular budget of the United Nations, as that would eliminate the potential for its work to be politicized.

50. His Government greatly valued the universal periodic review process and was taking practical steps to implement the recommendations made at its second universal periodic review. The memorandum of understanding the Government had signed with the United Nations would support Eritrea to strengthen its national capacity and accelerate implementation of the recommendations. It was unfortunate that certain countries persisted in tabling politically motivated, country-specific resolutions, and the current mandate against Eritrea was particularly unfortunate given the dire human rights record of the State spearheading it. His Government did not accept the resolution on the situation of human rights in Eritrea contained in the report of the Human Rights Council.

51. **Ms. Karimdoost** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that her Government had consistently supported the universal periodic review mechanism as a means of upholding human rights on a basis of cooperation rather than a confrontation. Iran had started the implementation of its second universal periodic review in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders. It was regrettable, however, that certain countries continued to politicize human rights, favouring confrontation over cooperation. Her delegation urged Member States to discontinue the practice of naming and shaming countries and disassociated itself from the part of the Human Rights Council's report ([A/71/53](#))



containing the so-called resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

52. Until the Human Rights Council complied with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and refrained from imposing a single lifestyle and non-consensual concepts on others, her country would not recognize mandates outside the sphere of internationally recognized human rights. Her delegation did, however, look forward to the implementation of Human Rights Council resolutions on the right to development, international cooperation in the field of human rights and human rights and unilateral coercive measures, which had been coordinated by the Non-Aligned Movement under her country's chairmanship. Recalling General Assembly resolution 68/127, which had been proposed by Iran, she highlighted the important responsibility of the Human Rights Council to raise global awareness of the imminent threat of terrorism and to admonish supporters of terrorism.

53. **Ms. Zālīte** (Latvia) said that the Human Rights Council remained the cornerstone of the United Nations human rights system. Her delegation welcomed its prompt and constructive engagement in human rights situations and strongly opposed any attempts to challenge its institutional status and entrusted competences. Its work should be guided by the universality and indivisibility of all human rights and efforts should be made to enrich its discussions by broadening the active participation of civil society.

54. The Human Rights Council faced numerous challenges at its core, such as an increasing workload and attempts to polarize opinions and filibuster. Nevertheless, in the face of increasing manifestations of racism and xenophobia, such as the recent xenophobic marches in the Russian Federation, it should maintain its focus on genuine human rights issues. Her country supported all efforts to boost its effectiveness, including through the promotion of the use of information and communication technologies.

55. Latvia had been elected to the Human Rights Council as an advocate of gender equality and freedom of expression, both offline and online, and had endeavoured to mainstream those priorities within its work. Her Government highly valued the free and unhindered participation of civil society and expressed concern at reprisals of any kind against human rights

defenders and civil society organizations. It fully supported the indispensable work of special procedures in monitoring human rights developments and was committed to ensuring that the special procedures system was independent and effective and could work with Member States without hindrance. The universal periodic review played a crucial role both in reminding Member States of their human rights obligations and as a catalyst for change.

56. **Ms. Maule** (Botswana) said that the universal periodic review was a successful component of the Human Rights Council, but that at the start of its third cycle, greater focus was needed on the implementation of the recommendations from the first two cycles and on the provision of technical cooperation and capacity building to those States which requested it. Her Government had updates the steps it would take to implement the recommendations made during the previous cycles.

57. Given the increasing number of humanitarian crises in every region, it was imperative for the Human Rights Council to remain neutral and yet represent the human rights of the most vulnerable members of the international community. Some of its thematic resolutions had caused unnecessary division and polarization as they had not paid enough attention to the unique development and the social and cultural conditions of individual countries. It had therefore become very difficult for the OHCHR and Human Rights Council mandate holders to carry out their responsibilities because Member States were failing to cooperate on issues that did not enjoy consensus. The Human Rights Council relied on Member States to work together towards the goals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and not allow individual interests to cloud their responsibility to promote and protect human rights. She called for the Human Rights Council to be allocated additional resources to carry out its extensive workload.

58. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba) said that the double standards, confrontation and political manipulation that had characterized the former Commission on Human Rights must not be allowed to take root in the Human Rights Council. Cooperation and respectful dialogue should inform its work, rather than selectivity and political manipulation. The universal periodic review was becoming the sole universal mechanism for

conducting a comprehensive analysis of a country's human rights situations. It was the main element that was different from the Commission and it had shown itself to be the best way of guaranteeing international cooperation on human rights on the basis of constructive dialogue and respect for the principles of universality, objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity. The special procedures and treaty bodies should respect those principles and adhere to the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council.

59. The Council should advocate a democratic and equitable international economic and political order to replace the current unjust and exclusive one; put an end to the unilateral coercive measures and the embargo imposed on Cuba for over 50 years; and prioritize the recognition of the right to international solidarity, so as to create the optimum conditions for addressing the serious global economic, financial, energy, environmental and food crises.

60. Cuba remained committed to the promotion of and respect for all human rights. It would continue to promote the rights to self-determination, peace, development and food; work to combat racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination; and strive to ensure the realization of cultural rights and respect for diversity.

61. **Mr. Joshi** (India) said that the strength of the Human Rights Council lay in its adherence to the principles of universality, transparency, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity and constructive international dialogue. The universal periodic review was testimony to those principles. It had achieved remarkable success in encouraging Member States to recognize and resolve gaps in the protection of human rights and developed into a highly valued process, which deserved to be continuously strengthened. The special procedures were also important, provided that mandate holders remained independent and impartial enough to carry out their tasks responsibly and in line with their mandates.

62. The agenda of the Human Rights Council appeared again to be becoming contentious; a more constructive and non-confrontational approach was needed that would be sensitive to the genuine concerns and capacity constraints of Member States and would

recognize the primacy of national efforts to uphold human rights.

63. The international community should take an unequivocal and resolute position against terrorism, which had emerged as one of the main threats to the full enjoyment of human rights. The democratic way of life was a deeply-rooted article of faith for over a billion Indians, whose human rights were protected and promoted by a democratic and pluralistic society with a secular polity, an impartial and independent judiciary, a vibrant civil society, free media and independent human rights institutions. By upholding the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, India showed its commitment to the concept of a just and equitable society.

*The meeting rose at 5 p.m.*