



# General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

**105**<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting

Wednesday, 29 June 2011, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.*

## Agenda items 13 and 115 (continued)

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

#### Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

##### Draft resolution (A/65/L.81\*)

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that the General Assembly held a debate on agenda item 13, jointly with agenda items 115 and 120, “Strengthening of the United Nations system”, at the 52nd plenary meeting on 23 November 2010.

Members will also recall that, under agenda items 13 and 115, the Assembly adopted resolutions 65/7 and 65/281 at its 41st and 100th plenary meetings on 29 October 2010 and 17 June 2011, respectively.

The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/65/L.81\*, entitled “Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council”. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.81\*?

*Draft resolution A/65/L.81\* was adopted (resolution 65/285).*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Chile, who has asked to speak

in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

**Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): It was an honour for Chile to lead the informal consultations of the General Assembly on the review of the implementation of resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. I wish to thank you, Sir, for the confidence you have placed in me in that regard.

I welcome the adoption of resolution 65/285, which takes note of the recommendations made in the report annexed to document A/65/866, as it represents another step forward in efforts to strengthen one of the main organs of the United Nations. It is a significant step that, modest as it may be, is also realistic and concrete.

Several of the recommendations detailed in the report can be implemented immediately by the Bureau and the secretariat of the Economic and Social Council. Others will require a new mandate from the General Assembly. I am convinced that the various institutions responsible for implementing the recommendations will make the necessary adjustments to do so as soon as possible.

Finally, Mr. President, I should like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the collaboration and constructive spirit of all delegations, as well as for the support received from the Economic and Social Council secretariat and your own Office.

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**The President** (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

**Mr. Serrano** (European Union): The European Union and its member States welcome the adoption of resolution 65/285. We also thank the facilitator, Ambassador Octavio Errázuriz of Chile, for his guidance in this process and for the report (A/65/866, annex) and recommendations submitted to us.

The European Union and its member States fully support a more effective Economic and Social Council as a principal organ for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues. The review of resolution 61/16 has afforded a valuable opportunity to reflect on how to enhance the Council's relevance in the context of the broader debate on global governance.

We fully share the positive assessment of the implementation of resolution 61/16 so far. The report and its recommendations identify many important areas where broad consensus exists and where work can already start. We would be missing an excellent opportunity if we waited until the next review, during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, to put them into practice. It is now up to United Nations Members and the Bureau and secretariat of the Economic and Social Council to follow through on the outcomes of our deliberations.

In particular, we must continue improving the division of labour between the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies in the economic, social and environmental fields. While respecting the different mandates, continued efforts must be made to identify comparative advantages, avoid duplication, enhance the overall coherence of agendas and promote synergies in our work. Further consideration should also be given to working towards a streamlined and more focused substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and improving the organization of its segments, especially the coordination and general segments.

Finally, the Economic and Social Council provides a unique platform for dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Group of 20. It is important that we preserve and enhance this key feature of the Council by improving the quality and impact of our meetings and outcomes.

As the former President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Hamidon Ali, stated last year when this review process began, while improvements can be made to the Council's hardware — that is, to resolution 61/16 and other legislation — the relevance of the Council ultimately depends on the its software, or our own attitude to this body and our willingness to make it work. The commitment of Member States, the Bureau of the Council, and the United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and Secretariat to the successful implementation of resolution 61/16 and, from now on, to using every opportunity to implement the recommendations contained in the report, would already significantly improve the Council's performance. The European Union and its member States stand ready to contribute to any efforts that the President of the Council and the Bureau members may wish to pursue in that regard.

Let me conclude by noting that the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly will offer an important opportunity to review progress, coinciding with the events on the Millennium Development Goals and following the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012. An effective and well-functioning Economic and Social Council should be an important element of the global governance framework. Let us therefore work together to allow the Council to fulfil its true potential and to help the United Nations to remain relevant in an ever-changing world.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

**Ms. Handrujovicz** (Argentina): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China.

At the outset, we would like to commend Ambassador Octavio Errázuriz, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, for his vigorous efforts and leadership in conducting the informal consultations on the review of the implementation of resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council.

Having considered the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report (A/65/866, annex) presented by the facilitator, the G-77 and China would like to stress in particular the relevance of ensuring strengthened and high-level participation in the spring meeting of the Economic and Social

Council, as well as of requesting the Council to have a closer relationship with United Nations funds and programmes.

Moreover, as emphasized in the report, it is important to highlight the key role of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination as the designated authority for promoting coherence within the United Nations system and beyond. In that sense, the G-77 and China wish to underline the relevance of improving the transparency and accountability of the Board. We also welcome the call for further review of the implementation of resolution 61/16 at the sixty-seventh session. In that regard, we believe that several issues could be explored, such as the establishment of a follow-up mechanism on the topics discussed in the Development Cooperation Forum, or the possibility of having a negotiated outcome so as to make the Forum more useful for developing countries.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I would like to express my sincere thanks to His Excellency Mr. Octavio Errázuriz, Permanent Representative of Chile, who so ably conducted the discussions in the informal consultations. I am sure that members of the Assembly join me in extending to him our sincere appreciation.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 13 and 115.

#### **Agenda item 7** (*continued*)

#### **Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that the Assembly concluded consideration of agenda item 23 and its sub-items at its 69th plenary meeting, on 20 December 2010. In order for the Assembly to consider draft resolution A/65/L.66/Rev.1, it will be necessary to reopen the consideration of agenda item 23.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of agenda item 23?

*It was so decided.*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Members will further recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on

17 September 2010, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 23 to the Second Committee. In order to enable the General Assembly to proceed expeditiously with its consideration of the draft resolution, may I also take it that the Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 23 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

*It was so decided.*

#### **Agenda item 23** (*continued*)

#### **Groups of countries in special situations**

##### **Draft resolution (A/65/L.66/Rev.1)**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.66/Rev.1.

**Ms. Handrujovicz** (Argentina): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the draft resolution on implementing the smooth transition strategy for countries graduating from the list of least developed country (LDC) status, contained in document A/65/L.66/Rev.1, under agenda item 23.

Graduation from the least developed country category reflects a country's success in its development and in its ability to achieve a transformation of its economy. Nevertheless, in spite of their graduation, such countries continue to face unique challenges. In that regard, the support of development partners in the form of trade preferences, official development assistance and technical cooperation plays a crucial role in their attainment of the category of middle-income country.

The Group of 77 and China stress the need for a smooth transition strategy for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries. A sudden withdrawal of support to a graduated country by its bilateral and multilateral development partners could have adverse effects, interrupting or reversing some of the development progress already achieved. Moreover, we believe that while the success of smooth transition strategies will depend on cooperation between the least developed country and the international community, the graduated country itself should play the central role in the formulation and implementation of its transition strategies. For those reasons, we would like to reiterate the importance of ensuring that the graduation of a country from LDC status not disrupt that country's development process.

The Group of 77 and China also reiterate the goal of the full, timely and effective implementation of the goals and targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs for the Decade 2011-2020, in which Member States commit to assisting the LDCs with the overarching goal of enabling half of them to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020.

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to thank all those Member States which sponsored this important draft resolution. We hope that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/65/L.66/Rev.1, entitled "Implementing the smooth transition strategy for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Botnaru** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed on the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/65/L.66/Rev.1: Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/65/L.66/Rev.1. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

*Draft resolution A/65/L.66/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 65/286)*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Maldives in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

**Mr. Mohamed** (Maldives): I would like to thank the Group of 77 and China, its Chair, Ambassador Argüello, his staff and the development partners for their work to achieve this consensus text. Resolution 65/286 strengthens the graduation framework for least

developed countries (LDCs) by further implementing resolution 59/209 on smooth transition of 2004, which endeavours to ensure that a country's transition from the LDC status is a smooth one. The resolution is also a step towards furthering our commitment to the goals of the Istanbul Programme of Action, which aims to prepare half of the LDCs to meet the graduation criteria by 2020.

In 2004, the General Assembly recognized that the transition from LDC to non-LDC status can be a difficult and precarious one. We acknowledged the fact that graduation does not mean that the structural handicaps faced by LDCs are solved, and we then decided that it was crucial that graduation from the LDC list not result in the destruction of a country's development plans and programmes. In doing so, this body resolved to phase out LDC-related benefits for graduates over a period appropriate to their development situations in order to give them an opportunity to prepare for the loss of the international support that contributed to this process.

However, the situation did not extend to all LDC-related benefits, especially United Nations system benefits. Today, we advance our work to better ensure a smooth transition by extending travel-related benefits to graduated LDCs. This benefit will go a long way towards allowing graduates that may require it to give voice to their concerns and needs through participation in the international dialogues that shape our decisions and activities.

Today, we also demonstrate our will to further examine ways to improve the graduation framework through monitoring the progress of graduates like Maldives and Cape Verde.

There is still work to be done to ensure that our intentions in 2004 are fully realized for those countries that will graduate in the coming years. Maldives is committed to continuing to share its experiences as we manoeuvre through our own transition period over the next three years, and we thank the Member States again for making this possible with today's resolution.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 23.

**Agenda item 113** (*continued*)**Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments****(h) Appointment of ad litem judges of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal****Note by the Secretary-General (A/65/853)**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that, by its resolution 65/251 of 24 December 2010, the General Assembly decided, inter alia, to continue the current funding arrangements until 31 December 2011 for the ad litem judges of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal, whose current terms of office are about to expire.

In document A/65/853, the members of the Internal Justice Council have indicated that the Council contacted the three ad litem judges who are currently serving on the United Nations Dispute Tribunal to determine whether they would accept the additional period of appointment. Judge Jean-François Cousin of France and Judge Nkemdilim Amelia Izuako of Nigeria have indicated their willingness to continue to serve for an additional six-month period. The Internal Justice Council thus recommends their appointment for the further six-month term approved by the General Assembly in resolution 65/251.

The Council also notes that Judge Marilyn Kaman of the United States of America has indicated that she is unable to be considered for reappointment for the additional six-month term.

The Internal Justice Council has recommended the extension of the terms of office of the following two ad litem judges for an additional six months of office beginning on 1 July 2011: Jean-François Cousin of France and Nkemdilim Amelia Izuako of Nigeria. May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to extend the terms of office of these two ad litem judges for an additional six months of office, beginning on 1 July 2011?

*It was so decided.*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (h) of agenda item 113.

**Agenda item 34****Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development****Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/846\*)****Draft resolution (A/65/L.74)**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Georgia to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.74.

**Mr. Lomaia** (Georgia): Today we introduce draft resolution A/65/L.74 on the right of Georgia's internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their homes in safety and dignity. Almost a year has passed since the adoption of resolution 64/296 upholding the right to return. Regrettably, as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon concludes in his report on the implementation of that resolution,

“No major developments took place during the reporting period with regard to the exercise by the refugees and internally displaced persons of their right to return.” (A/65/846\*, para. 9)

To the contrary, the situation has further deteriorated. In at least two key respects, the security situation in the regions of concern has worsened and the property rights of the displaced have been rampantly disregarded. Unfortunately, the right to return has been subverted by politically motivated obstructions. Allow me to share just one example of this.

Many members have seen a letter circulated by a Member State earlier this month that is purportedly focused on the draft resolution under consideration. Yet, despite the fact that the draft resolution exclusively concerns the humanitarian challenges facing internally displaced persons and refugees, this letter dedicates, I emphasize, not a single word to the displaced. Instead, it seeks to legitimize so-called new realities and, referring to citizens of my country of varied backgrounds, the letter declares that they “will never be able to exist within a single country”. In this new reality, there is no place for over 400,000 people of various ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds — a staggering 75 per cent of the pre-conflict population — who have been expelled from their homes in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia.

This interpretation invites the international community to accept a paradigm in which three-quarters of the population is ethnically cleansed — an action which is then declared a new reality and accounted for as a *fait accompli*. We believe that an overwhelming majority in this Hall would instead agree with what the Secretary-General tells us in his aforementioned report:

“It is essential to recognize return as both a human right and a humanitarian issue that must be addressed irrespective of any solution to an underlying conflict” (A/65/846\*, *para. 25*).

The Secretary-General could hardly have been any clearer. In fact, in presenting this draft resolution we set politics aside, focusing exclusively on the humanitarian dimension of the problem.

The displaced are consumed by all that they were forced to leave behind — their once-vibrant, multi-ethnic communities that are now ghost villages and towns or foreign military garrisons. But they have positive thoughts, too. They dream of the day they will return to heal the wounds and to restore their broken neighbourhoods. They earnestly believe that the consistent calls of the international community will bear fruit, and that those who prevent these men, women and children from returning to their homes will one day be compelled to give up.

That is why the draft resolution has importance in encouraging the participants of the Geneva talks to redouble their efforts, ensure respect for human rights and create favourable conditions conducive to the voluntary, safe and dignified return of all internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to their places of origin.

We have said it before and we will continue to say it until justice is served. Each and every one of these over 400,000 souls carries a dream in his or her heart — a dream of returning to their roots, to the soil that nurtured generations of their ancestors, and of sharing all of this with their children. We continue to believe that maintaining the issue of Georgia’s IDPs and refugees on the agenda of the General Assembly makes a significant contribution to the eventual return of the displaced.

We also believe that an important tool yielded by this draft resolution is the annual reporting by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly. Most

important, though, the draft resolution before us resonates with the humanitarian mission of the General Assembly. It sends a powerful signal to all those forcefully displaced in my country, as well as to others in similar conditions all around the world, that the international community stands by them.

Despite the lack of progress in recent years, hundreds of thousands of IDPs and refugees have again placed their expectations in this house, hoping for a helpful decision from the General Assembly. I urge the members to vote in favour of the right to return.

**Mr. Pankin** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): For the fourth year in a row, we have before us a draft resolution on the status of internally displaced persons and refugees in Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia (A/65/L.74). As before, it has nothing to do either with reality or with concern for the status of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees or with the lofty humanitarian purposes declared by the sponsors. The Georgian side, from one year to the next, persists in playing the same old card in the hope of drawing the international community’s attention to it.

The counter-productiveness of this latest manoeuvre leaves no room for doubt. It is patently obvious that the sponsors of the draft prepared it outside of the context of current political realities in the region. Thus, in the title of the draft resolution and by reaffirming the right to return of IDPs and refugees “to their homes throughout Georgia, including in Abkhazia and South Ossetia” (A/65/L.74, *para. 1*), they are floating the notion that Abkhazia and South Ossetia somehow belong to Georgia. The objective reality today is that there are independent States in the region — Abkhazia and South Ossetia — and that the Georgian leadership and its allies will need to deal with them sooner or later.

The draft resolution’s alleged aims to resolve the status of IDPs and refugees from Abkhazia and South Ossetia in fact only complicates an already unstable negotiating process in the Geneva discussions. However, the Geneva discussions are the only effective negotiating format for the representatives of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Georgia, including on humanitarian issues and the status of the refugees and IDPs.

No one continues to be surprised by Georgia’s obstinate unwillingness to agree to conclude a legally binding agreement on the non-use of force with the

South Ossetian and Abkhazian sides. Thus, the draft resolution text's appeal to all participants in the Geneva discussions to invigorate efforts to establish a firm peace and agree to more effective measures to strengthen trust sounds like blatant demagoguery.

If the Georgian side proposes to discuss this theme here in New York, as we infer from the draft resolution, then it is essential to invite representatives of the Abkhazian and South Ossetian sides. This type of discussion makes sense only with their participation. However, as far as we know, Tbilisi is not prepared to go along with that, and the representatives of Tskhinvali and Sukhumi have once again been refused visas. With the utmost obstinacy, the Georgian side is endeavouring to impose some kind of timeline for the return of all IDPs. One can only guess the motives of the sponsors or, ignoring the position of the Secretary-General, who has made himself very clear in the relevant reports, conclude that such a step is impossible at this stage.

Thus, it is totally obvious that Tbilisi, based only on short-term political considerations, is trying to inflate the humanitarian angle with no concern whatsoever for the fate of thousands of Georgians, Abkhazians, Ossetians and citizens of other ethnic groups who have suffered as a result of this short-sighted and aggressive policy. The Russian Federation is convinced that the Georgian draft resolution will not help to normalize the situation in the region and build confidence between the Abkhazian, Ossetian and Georgian sides, which is essential to addressing the problems of IDPs and refugees.

These problems arose not because of some mythical foreign conspiracy, but as a result of a concerted policy of the Georgian authorities themselves. Its culmination, as the Assembly knows, was Georgia's armed attack on peaceful Tskhinvali during the night of 7 and 8 August 2008.

Based on all of the foregoing, the delegation of the Russian Federation asks for a vote on draft resolution A/65/L.74 and will vote against it. We hope that the States Members of the United Nations will follow our example and not support this clearly politicized initiative from Tbilisi.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/65/L.74, entitled "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees

from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia".

I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

**Mrs. Kolontai** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus has carefully studied draft resolution A/65/L.74, submitted by Georgia. We believe that initiatives on such important questions as providing assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons must be taken on the basis of a broad consensus and as the result of an open and transparent negotiating process, with the participation of all interested parties.

We are in agreement with what is stated in paragraph 8 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/65/846):

"At present, the Geneva discussions remain the only forum for relevant stakeholders to meet and address the issues identified in General Assembly resolution 64/296."

We call on the participants in these discussions to continue to seek mutually acceptable approaches to resolving the issues raised in the draft resolution through negotiations, with the assistance of the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations.

The Geneva platform is the most appropriate forum for the resolution of problems relating not only to security and stability in the region but also to humanitarian issues, including with respect to refugees and internally displaced persons. It is our view that this confrontational draft resolution will not be able to play a substantive role in this process. These types of documents must be solely consensual.

On that basis, the delegation of Belarus will not participate in the voting on the draft resolution.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Congo,

Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Vanuatu

*Against:*

Armenia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam

*Abstaining:*

Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Yemen, Zambia

*Draft resolution A/65/L.74 was adopted by 57 votes to 13, with 74 abstentions (resolution 65/287).*

[Subsequently, the delegation of Algeria advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote against; the delegations of the Congo, Fiji, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates advised the Secretariat that they had intended to abstain.]

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted.

**Mr. Gürber** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland would like to explain why it abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/65/L.74, entitled "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia".

Switzerland, in keeping with its policy framework, would recall that there is an obligation to pay particular attention to the situation of internally displaced persons within their own countries and of refugees in post-conflict situations, as well as to their right of return to their places of origin. Its goal is to provide, on its territory, optimal conditions for the discussions that were launched in Geneva in the wake of the 2008 conflicts, which we consider to be the appropriate forum for addressing the issue of internally displaced persons and refugees.

Switzerland thus supports all the efforts made by the international community aimed at reaching a consensus solution among the parties on the issue of internally displaced persons and refugees.

**Mr. Apakan** (Turkey): I am taking the floor to briefly explain our position.

We remain concerned at the fact that the conflicts in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia remain unresolved, as this situation has serious economic, social and humanitarian consequences, primarily for the peoples of Georgia, but also for the peoples of the Caucasus region as a whole.

Turkey supports all the efforts aimed at the peaceful resolution of these conflicts and invites all parties to work towards a comprehensive and sustainable peace that would also provide for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

As a country of the region and one of Georgia's neighbours, Turkey stands ready to contribute to all efforts to that end. In this respect, I wish to reiterate Turkey's firm commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

We continue to believe that the Geneva talks provide a valuable forum to address also the issue of the voluntary, safe, dignified and unhindered return of

internally displaced persons and refugees. We hope that the discussions in Geneva can be made to bear their full potential in order to have a positive and concrete outcome. To achieve that, we call on all sides to seriously engage with others in a cooperative manner and to take action to build confidence.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia, who wishes to make a statement following the voting.

**Mr. Lomaia** (Georgia): Together, we have just adopted a resolution (resolution 65/287) that lifts the hopes of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees who were forced by violence and fear to flee their homes and communities. It is with them — the citizens of Georgia of many ethnic origins — in mind that I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to the Assembly.

Today's vote marks the fourth straight year that the Assembly has invoked the norms and principles of international law to defend the right of every IDP and refugee to return to his or her home. With each passing year, the circle of understanding and support is widening.

I know that the Assembly's support of the resolution did not come easily, a fact that had little to do with substance itself, which makes the Assembly's affirmative vote even more noteworthy. Unfortunately, the moral clarity that guides us all on this issue has

been challenged once again by strenuous attempts to politicize these efforts. But truth and dignity prevailed, and the resolution was adopted by an even wider margin than in previous years.

Members may rest assured that we are in no way embittered by the politics that preceded this vote. Quite the opposite — we remain as determined as ever to bring dignity and relief to our compatriots who have suffered for so long. We will engage with all stakeholders, including the party that led the opposition to this resolution, to ensure that the right to return is respected.

Today, the General Assembly upheld the principles of this institution and the norms of the international community. We hope that, in a year from now when we gather again to discuss this issue, true progress will have been made on the ground.

Finally, on behalf of all those who have suffered from violence and discrimination because they were of the wrong ethnic background, I would like once again to express our heartfelt gratitude to each and every Member State that voted in favour of this resolution. I would also like to express my appreciation to those delegations which, unlike last year, today did not vote against the resolution.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 34.

*The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.*