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Seventy-sixth session

34th plenary meeting
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New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 124 (continued)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft resolution (A/76/L.8/Rev.1)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda to introduce draft resolution A/76/L.8/Rev.1.

Mrs. Rugwabiza (Rwanda): My delegation thanks you very much, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting for the consideration by the General Assembly of draft resolution A/76/L.8/Rev.1, entitled "Follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General entitled 'Our Common Agenda'". I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution on behalf of a cross-regional group of countries that forms the core group of sponsors, namely, Qatar, Denmark, Fiji, Georgia, Mexico, Singapore, Sweden and my own country, Rwanda. We thank all 155 co-sponsors of the draft resolution and invite all other Member States to consider sponsoring it from the floor during this meeting.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your leadership and personal engagement, which helped us to reach consensus on the revised draft resolution submitted for action. We also thank the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia, Ambassador Abdallah Al-Mouallimi, for his role in facilitating the discussions to achieve consensus. We are grateful to all Member States for their constructive and active engagement on this procedural draft resolution.

We wish to focus our statement on three points: first, the purpose of the draft resolution; secondly, the process that led to it; and, thirdly, our hope and promise.

On the purpose, there is one, and only one, purpose to this draft resolution, that is, to follow up on the report of the Secretary-General entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). We believe that it is essential to follow up on the report for two reasons. First, we believe that the issues covered in the report are of critical importance to our countries and peoples. Secondly, we wish to follow up on the report that we, the Member States, asked the Secretary-General to prepare and present to us. That is why we intentionally aimed for, and kept, the draft resolution procedural.

A few of our colleagues suggested that we wait to initiate the follow-up process to the Secretary-General's report. The report was submitted to us on 10 September, a few days before the end of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. Today, in the third month of the seventy-sixth session, we believe that it is not too early to start a follow-up process. We also believe that it is important to devote sufficient time during the seventy-sixth session to the substantive consideration of the important proposals and recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report.

We are also mindful that not all our delegations have the same resources, and we know from experience that lengthy procedural processes place a heavier burden on smaller delegations.

On the process, throughout the process that led to draft resolution A/76/L.8/Rev.1, we were guided by the

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need to be fully inclusive, while remaining focused on the purpose of the procedural draft resolution. As all Member States will recall, we began with an informal plenary in early October, when we held open, inclusive consultations and carefully listened to the proposals and advice of Member States. Thereafter, we circulated a document entitled "Possible elements for a draft resolution" to all Member States on 14 October. That first "zero" draft was circulated in advance of an open, formal meeting held on 18 October, to which all Member States were invited. Following further engagement and discussions, we circulated another revised draft resolution in response to the views expressed by Member States at the informal meetings of the General Assembly, which ran through October to early November.

Following the informal plenary meetings of the General Assembly, we circulated yet another revision of the draft resolution based on additional proposals from Member States. Throughout the process, we remained open and continued to engage with all Member States, while seeking additional clarifications.

We also received from a group of Member States written proposed amendments to the revised draft resolution, circulated on 3 November, which were discussed with the proponent and led to the revised draft resolution that we are considering this afternoon.

As we said before, in the end we may not agree on all the recommendations in the report, but we ought to agree to send a message to the world that we are ready to work together on our common agenda. We are delighted that the Assembly, with a consensus adoption, will be sending the strongest possible signal.

With regard to our hope and promise, it is our hope that the spirit of constructive engagement, flexibility and focus on making progress that guided us throughout the process that led to this consensus draft resolution will continue to prevail as we embark on the substantive consideration of the proposals and recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). As the cross-regional core group of sponsors that submitted the draft resolution, we are committed to remaining actively and constructively engaged in the follow-up process. We are determined to work with all Member States to ensure that the United Nations is able and capable to respond to all current and future global challenges.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/76/L.8/Rev.1.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation is willing to join in the consensus adoption of the draft resolution contained in document A/76/L.8/Rev.1, on follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982).

As is known, my delegation, together with some others, had expressed certain concerns with regard to the content of the original version of the draft resolution and the process relating to its consideration. We are most grateful to you, Mr. President, for convening informal consultations under your auspices to promote agreement on the draft resolution. Under your guidance and with a display of constructive engagement and flexibility on both sides, we were able to achieve a draft text, which the Assembly will hopefully be able to adopt by consensus. I would like in particular to express my appreciation to my colleague the Permanent Representative of Singapore, Ambassador Gafoor, for his imaginative and constructive approach in negotiating the agreed draft text, and to my brother the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia, Ambassador Al-Mouallimi, for his mediation efforts and the delicious Arabic coffee, which fuelled the spirit of compromise.

My delegation expressed its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the submission of the report on our common agenda. The draft resolution to be adopted will enable Member States to give close consideration to the rich and substantive report submitted by the Secretary-General in response to the request of the General Assembly in its seventy-fifth anniversary declaration (resolution 75/1).

We look forward to being informed by the Secretary-General of the proposals in the report on which he has mandates within agreed frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and to be closely consulted on his endeavour to accelerate the implementation of those agreed frameworks, which must remain our highest priority.

We also look forward to working under your guidance. Mr. President, to give intergovernmental

consideration within the Assembly to the host of new proposals advanced in the Secretary-General's report. We trust that that governmental process will be organized in ways that enable Member States to closely consider and decide on each of the report's proposals.

Effective multilateralism, under the umbrella of an empowered United Nations system, can be promoted only if it enjoys the widest possible support among States Members of the United Nations. Pakistan will contribute constructively to achieving that objective.

Mr. Takht Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation would like to express its appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and for facilitating the discussions aimed at bridging the gaps within the different views regarding the adoption of procedural draft resolution A/76/L.8/Rev.1.

We are grateful to the co-sponsors of the draft resolution and the like-minded group for their cooperation and flexibility to reach consensus. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the submission of his forward-looking report *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which encompasses the challenges that we face and presents a range of recommendations in order to address them. Since the report's submission, Member States have presented different views and observations regarding the several new concepts and proposals contained in the report necessitating close and careful consideration by Member States. We wish to emphasize that the successful consideration of the Secretary-General's report will greatly depend on the continuation of the spirit of compromise and understanding. Due to its extensive implications for the work of the Organization, the report will need to be considered through timely and in-depth discussions, and any decision on the recommendations contained in the report requires negotiations among Member States within an intergovernmental process.

Bearing in mind the fact that the report contains a number of proposals that fall within the existing mandates, we need to avoid duplication and the imposition of undue budgetary implications on the Organization.

My delegation is prepared to actively engage in the consideration of this important report within the intergovernmental process, and we look forward to continued engagement with the Secretariat in that endeavour.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt): Egypt will join the consensus and will co-sponsor draft resolution A/76/L.8/Rev.1, entitled "Follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General entitled 'Our Common Agenda'". We highly appreciate your kind efforts, Mr. President, towards achieving consensus on this important draft resolution. In the same vein, we highly value the work of the Permanent Representatives of Pakistan and Singapore to that end. Equally, we of course also thank my dearest brother Ambassador Abdallah Al-Mouallimi, Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia, and all those who introduced amendments to the draft resolution so that it was consensual.

During the relevant General Assembly debate on 27 October, my delegation called for avoiding polarization in the follow-up process to *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). The events of the past two weeks proved that our point was correct. We believe that the best way to avoid polarization is ensuring transparency, preserving Member States' ownership of the follow-up and implementation processes and working in a spirit of consensus.

Our Common Agenda requires further consideration and discussion to make sure that its suggested rich proposals will be reflected in a form that is acceptable to all Member States. We look forward to the President of the General Assembly announcing and shortly launching an intergovernmental follow-up process that grants all Member States an opportunity to express their views, consider the very rich proposals brought to the table by the Secretary-General and implement the agreed recommendations efficiently and smoothly. Only through such a process will we be able to do *Our Common Agenda* justice and ensure that it truly is our common agenda collectively within the United Nations.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/76/L.8/Rev.1.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/76/L.8/Rev.1 and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become

sponsors of draft resolution A/76/L.8/Rev.1: Armenia, Bahamas, Bahrain, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Paraguay, the Philippines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Suriname, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Uganda, the United States of America, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/76/L.8/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/76/L.8/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 76/6).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position after adoption, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): A year ago, we met to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and address the way forward to tackle the looming challenges ahead of us. In that spirit, we asked the Secretary-General to report back with his recommendations to advance our common agenda.

We deeply appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General in rising to the task and giving us a very substantial and innovative report as an initial basis for Member States to work on. The report presented to Member States references many fundamental concepts to our societies, such as solidarity, trust, inclusion and participation. If we want to lead the world in tackling our current challenges, we should do it also by our own example, applying those principles in the relationships among Member States themselves and between them and the United Nations system.

The report also contains a substantial number of concrete proposals that will demand a reasonable amount of time for all members to analyse and consult with their capitals. That is not intended to slow the process but to give the Secretary-General's report the respect it deserves by subjecting it to detailed analysis before acting on it.

Those elements of trust, participation and due consideration are the ones in which Brazil roots its position on *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982). At

the same time that we welcome our ability to reach consensus on a relevant and high-impact resolution (resolution 76/6), we would like to make a few remarks with regard to the process that led us here.

The first point I would like to raise concerns the preparation of the document, which was done through a process of outreach to other delegations that — well-intentioned as it might have been — is not the same as engaging in negotiations. The fact that it took substantial efforts just to hold discussions about the text and to have our concerns considered is a worrisome sign. We sincerely hope that will not be the way forward on such an important issue and that the principles of solidarity, trust and broad participation stressed by the Secretary-General in his report will prevail in the next phase.

Secondly, I would like to emphasize the centrality of Member State ownership. The United Nations system is the core of the multilateral system, which grounds itself in respect for each member's sovereignty and interests. Its work should reflect the collective will of Member States after proper consideration and negotiation. Consultation among and with Member States is inescapable, for this is an Organization created for them to lead and in which they are the ones that truly understand its political process. We should not endanger those fundamentals by approving action on mandates that we do not have clarity or reasonable time to consult on.

As stated at the beginning, we would like to get this right. To that end, we need a precise and participative modality to carry the work forward. We will keep advocating for that as a way to ensure that all countries have their interests and concerns heard and incorporated in the discussions. Unfortunately, that has not always been the case, as we observed recently in the lead-up to the United Nations Food Systems Summit.

To conclude, I would like to express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for bringing us all together to find a way towards consensus, as well as to all those who showed openness to dialogue and worked very hard and constructively to bridge their differences and achieve a balanced resolution. Let us be inspired by that spirit of openness and cooperation in the work ahead of us on *Our Common Agenda*.

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (spoke in Spanish): As on previous occasions, we would like at the outset to highlight our gratitude for the work of the Secretary-General in elaborating his report entitled *Our Common*

Agenda (A/75/982) as the inspiration for an intense and ambitious effort that will require the collective work of all Member States.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to those countries that resolutely dedicated themselves to achieving the adoption of resolution 76/6 by consensus in a way that considers the legitimate concerns and aspirations of all. Argentina joined that consensus because we believe it is the only possible way to tackle matters as pertinent as those contained in the report of the Secretary-General. *Our Common Agenda* touches upon issues of great importance to the international community. That is why we would once again like to underscore how vital it is to conclude a process of in-depth discussion among Member States in the framework of the General Assembly.

My country would like to emphasize that the follow-up to the mandate of the document should be the outcome of an agreement between Member States, respecting the time frames that each fundamental issue requires for a comprehensive in-depth discussion. An intergovernmental dialogue in that regard would make it possible to incorporate a global vision in the document that reflects the expectations and needs of all.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the need for concerted joint efforts by the Secretary-General and Member States to conduct discussions and subsequently achieve implementation as the outcome of a genuine consensus.

Mrs. Guerra Tamayo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, and your Office, for your efforts to drive forward the dialogue and provide the necessary space for discussion that has allowed for the adoption by consensus of resolution 76/6.

We are also grateful for the determination to find compromise-based solutions shown by the lead sponsors of the resolution, as well as the leadership shown by the Permanent Representatives of Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Pakistan to ensure that the intergovernmental follow-up process to the report of the Secretary-General entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) gets off to a good start. The report addresses issues of a particularly crucial nature that concern all States. Therefore, the adoption of the resolution without a vote constitutes an important step forward.

We join the Secretary-General in his repeated calls for strengthening multilateralism and international solidarity. At the same time, we are convinced that more robust multilateralism and a more effective Organization are possible only if we fully respect the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, the follow-up process to the report that is mandated in the resolution should be based on an unequivocal reaffirmation of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter and the intergovernmental nature of the Organization. Moreover, that process must be led in a balanced, transparent and inclusive manner for all Member States.

The Secretary-General's report includes a broad raft of initiatives and proposals of various natures, with implications for the scope of the United Nations and the mandates and working methods of its organs, as well as for the role of Member States and the Secretariat and the involvement of other actors.

As noted in the debate on the report, the recommendations it contains warrant the full consideration of Member States. It would therefore be counterproductive to impose the vision of a certain group of delegations over others or take a decision on the implementation of certain recommendations without consensus in that regard.

For our part, we reiterate our commitment to be participate constructively in the intergovernmental discussions on the proposals in the report in defence of multilateralism, international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Shmat (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Belarusian delegation has always attached great importance to, and will always support the principles of, multilateral diplomacy, on which the largest multilateral Organization in the world, the United Nations, is based.

Among the four indivisible and mutually strengthening principle of the United Nations, we would like to focus on one particular principle: the United Nations should be at the heart of agreements for the actions of States to achieve common goals.

In connection with the adoption of resolution 76/6 and the follow-up process to the report of the Secretary-General entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), we would like to express Belarus' position after joining the consensus on the resolution.

First, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for preparing such a comprehensive and insightful

report. We take note of the work that has been done, the results of which will be used in the future to conduct an intergovernmental process with the due participation of Member States.

Secondly, we believe that, given the unifying nature of that process, the upcoming negotiations must be conducted in full transparency and without undue haste. They should take into account the views of all Member States and be held in strict compliance with the working methods of the General Assembly.

Thirdly, we note that any future process must be aimed at mobilizing efforts in the framework of already existing documents, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Fourthly, we reiterate Belarus' position on the inviolable character of the cornerstone document of the multilateral system, namely, the Charter of the United Nations. We should also like to recall that all Member States have undertaken the obligation to strictly adhere to the provisions of the Charter, which prevail over all other obligations derived from any other international agreements and treaties.

Mrs. Maitra (India): India is pleased to join the consensus on the adoption of resolution 76/6. We appreciate the presentation of the report of the Secretary-General entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) in response to the mandate given by our leaders in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations.

We also deeply appreciate the role that you played, Mr. President, in facilitating the consultations on the text of the resolution that led to its consensual adoption.

We support the remarks delivered by the Permanent Representative of Brazil concerning the process leading up to today's adoption and going forward.

We view the resolution as a procedural first step in the process of Member State-led considerations of the various proposals contained in the report. It is our understanding that, as we proceed, the approval and implementation of those proposals will maintain the Member State-centric character of all United Nations processes. India will be a constructive and active participant in any such process.

Mr. Pieris (Sri Lanka): We thank the Secretary-General for seizing upon a moment in history that he

himself refers to as "an inflection point", reminding us that we have reached a point of no return. However, we are pleased by the adoption of resolution 76/6.

Conflicts across the planet appear to be becoming worse. Climate change continues to threaten our very existence. Millions and millions of people around the world face poverty and violence, deprived of basic human necessities such as drinking water, meals to maintain their bodies and souls and education.

As the Secretary-General puts it, there is no turning back for us. We have to make just one choice to uphold *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) if we are to survive as a human race. We have been reminded that the time has come to bind ourselves together in global solidarity; renew the social contract between States and subjects; rally around science and knowledge; look afresh at performance indicators with regard to economic prosperity and progress; think in the long term; and take seriously the intergenerational trust required to put in place stronger multilateral systems rooted in the principles of the United Nations.

We have before us a very comprehensive and ambitious common agenda. May I, however, hasten to strike a note of caution with regard to a few matters.

We would do well to remember that the adults of today were the young people of yesterday. We bring with us intelligence, rich cultures, knowledge and resources to be handed down to the young people of today, who will be the adults of tomorrow and enjoy the benefits of that heritage and legacy.

It is therefore important to acknowledge that the concept of intergenerational trust must be understood in its correct perspective. Neither we adults nor young people can abdicate those roles to either party. We need each other. We are a seamless extension of life's own way of propagating itself. The symbiotic relationship must be nourished, propagated and preserved in perpetuity for the sake of the successful execution of that common agenda.

We would also do well to remember that the current crisis is nothing but a misadventure of scientific activity in studies with regard to the gain-of-function research on pathogens. We must be careful not to abdicate our right to a dignified human existence — not even to science. We cannot make science our master, although we would venture into the uncharted seas of science

in the endeavour to achieve a better life on Earth for humankind.

I am pleased that we have found consensus today on resolution 76/6, on the basis of which we recognize our collective well-being and will endeavour to find a basis for consultations. We have found a consensus and requested the Secretary-General to engage and consult with members. You, Sir, as President of the General Assembly, will play a vital supervisory role in oversight to begin inclusive intergovernmental consultations on the various proposals. Sri Lanka supports that initiative and assures the Assembly that it will spare no effort to pursue *Our Common Agenda* in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position after adoption.

I would like to thank all members for demonstrating our unity of purpose on resolution 76/6. The report of the Secretary-General entitled *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) offers a vision of a future grounded in solidarity and common cause, in which global decision-making is more representative. *Our Common Agenda* presents ideas that build on the achievements of multilateral cooperation and can make a tangible difference in people's lives.

I listened carefully to members' views during the plenary meetings that I convened on *Our Common Agenda* last month. While I heard different opinions and concerns on the proposals contained in the report,

I also heard a common purpose from Member States to consider those issues carefully and to go forward hand in hand.

Thanks to the efforts of all delegations and a willingness to work together, we are not a divided house today. I would like to express my gratitude to all delegations and extend a special mention to the Permanent Representative of Singapore and the Permanent Representative of Pakistan.

I would also like to acknowledge in particular the contribution and efforts of the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia, Ambassador Abdallah Al-Mouallimi, who agreed, upon my personal request, to offer his good offices to bring all parties together. Ambassador Al-Mouallimi has given new meaning to Arabic coffee diplomacy. I am awaiting an invitation from him in that regard.

Resolution 76/6, adopted by consensus, provides me with a mandate to take the next steps. I am committed to ensuring that the process is open to, and inclusive of, all Member States. I intend to communicate with members in the coming days on the next steps in that regard. Let us work together with a unity of purpose, for the world is but one family with one agenda: *Our Common Agenda*.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 124.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.