



General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

66th plenary meeting
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New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Carazo (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 4.40 p.m.

Agenda item 35 (continued)

Prevention of Armed Conflict

(a) Prevention of armed conflict

Note by the Secretary-General (A/76/690)

Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico thanks Ms. Catherine Marchi-Uhel for presenting (see A/76/PV.65) the eighth report of the report of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (see A/76/690) and congratulates the entire team of the Mechanism for the great work it has carried out so far.

First of all, we note the very significant progress that has been made in terms of cooperation. It is remarkable that some national jurisdictions have reported to the Mechanism that they have opened criminal proceedings on crimes committed in Syria. We hope that, as in the cases of Germany, France and Sweden, national jurisdictional authorities will use the Mechanism as a repository of evidence to support their investigations and the development of solid cases.

We also highlight cooperation with such other mechanisms created to investigate and contribute

to accountability for crimes committed in Syria as the Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic established by the Human Rights Council. Coordination among all these mechanisms is essential to avoid duplication and, of course, to maximize available resources.

The Mechanism has also shown innovation in investigation, such as the use of joint investigative teams, the incorporation of technology and data analysis. All of these tools have been important in identifying and documenting such lines of investigation as chemical weapons attacks and attacks on medical facilities.

These efforts are undoubtedly essential in combating impunity. However, as we have stated on previous occasions, Mexico believes that the situation in Syria should have long ago been referred to the International Criminal Court, a possibility that is contemplated, as we all know, in article 13 (b) of the Rome Statute. We regret that the use of the veto has once again blocked this avenue.

Mexico's position on the veto is well known. We believe, as we have promoted through the Franco-Mexican initiative, which already has 105 signatories, that the permanent members of the Security Council should refrain from resorting to the veto when the Council is faced with situations involving the commission of mass atrocities. Likewise, it is unacceptable that the veto be abused to prevent

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accountability, including, of course, the failure to refer situations to the International Criminal Court.

The 11 years of conflict in Syria have caused incalculable and irreparable losses and suffering for the population and has profoundly damaged the social fabric. It is clear that there is not and never will be a military solution. The only way forward is political dialogue through the road map outlined in resolution 2254 (2015). The fights against impunity and for accountability are necessary pillars for the success of this political process. That is why Mexico strongly reaffirms its support for the Mechanism and the fulfilment of its mandate and underlines the importance of ensuring that it has the budget it needs to carry out its work efficiently. Its work contributes in a very important way to closing the justice gaps in favour of victims.

Mr. Leschenko (Ukraine): Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer (see A/76/PV.65). We would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

Ukraine is grateful to Ms. Catherine Marchi-Uhel, Head of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM), for presenting the most recent report on the activities of the Mechanism (see A/76/690).

We are pleased to note the progress achieved by the IIIM throughout the reporting period. As one of co-sponsors of the Mechanism back in 2016, our delegation strongly supports the IIIM in implementing its important mandate on collecting evidence of atrocities committed in Syria, including murders, torture and inhuman treatment of people. It is crucial that victims and survivors of international crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic, and their families, remain at the heart of the Mechanism's work.

We recently observed the eleventh anniversary of the Syrian conflict. The regime's actions against the Syrian people have led to one of the bloodiest armed conflicts in the twenty-first century. Ukraine condemns in the strongest terms the Syrian regime and its allies, primarily Russia, of massive, systematic and grave violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law. Thousands of people have been

murdered, while many others are missing, disappeared, detained or subjected to torture.

A clear parallel can be drawn between the hostilities, war crimes and human rights violations in Syria and those in Ukraine, both with the direct engagement of Russian military forces. As was correctly said in this Hall during this morning's meeting (see A/76/PV.65), the current violations by Russian military forces in Ukraine is a repetition of the Russian handbook written in Syria.

Let me stress that there is no place for impunity for those who have committed such heinous crimes. They must be brought to justice, wherever those crimes are committed — in Syria, Ukraine or elsewhere. We will continue to support the activities of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, as well as the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the Investigation and Identification Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Ukraine also supports a sustainable political solution of the conflict in Syria and recalls that the political transition should be implemented in line with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) and the 2012 Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex).

Mr. Flynn (Ireland): I would also like to thank Ms. Catherine Marchi-Uhel, Head of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM), for her informative briefing.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union (see A/76/PV.65).

We commend the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for its important work in gathering extensive and detailed evidence of crimes committed in Syria. We also commend its continued engagement with civil society and other stakeholders, including through its bulletins.

During more than a decade of conflict, the international community has witnessed the commission of the most heinous crimes in Syria, including the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons, war crimes and crimes against humanity, which have shocked us all. As members of the international community, it is our common responsibility to ensure

accountability for those crimes. That is not only key to ensuring the right of the Syrian people to truth, justice and effective remedies, but it is also essential for a just, inclusive and sustainable political solution.

The Security Council must remain seized where gross violations have taken place. Undoubtedly, the best means of ensuring accountability is by way of a Council referral of the situation to the International Criminal Court. However, in circumstances where the Council remains unable to progress accountability in Syria, we rely on entities such as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the Investigation and Identification Team and fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Those bodies allow us to bridge the impunity gap, including by documenting those crimes and gathering extensive and detailed evidence. That work is vital to attributing responsibility and protecting the integrity of the rules-based system, and it therefore demands the support of the international community.

Along with those international mechanisms, the role of civil society in documenting human rights abuses, assisting victims and promoting accountability for those responsible is crucial. Initiatives such as the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons keep accountability issues high on the international agenda. We also commend those States that have initiated proceedings to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity in their domestic courts.

The situation of detainees and missing persons remains one of the greatest tragedies of this conflict. The psychological impact on the victims and their families is unconscionable. Ireland continues to call on the Syrian authorities and on other parties to release all those who have been arbitrarily detained or abducted and to make the fate of missing persons known. We welcome the emphasis on this important issue in resolution 76/228, adopted by the Assembly on 24 December 2021.

The Secretary-General has been tasked with investigating ways to bolster efforts. In that context, Ireland notes the important work already conducted by the Mechanism, welcomes the commitment to further engagements and encourages the assessment of effective coordination across the United Nations system.

A generation of Syrian children has grown up knowing nothing but conflict. They have been failed time and time again. Grave violations of children's rights continue unabated, including recruitment, abductions, killing and maiming. Girls are disproportionately impacted by sexual and gender-based violence and the targeting of educational and health facilities. We must strive to protect children from harm, vindicate their rights and hold those responsible to account.

Ireland remains a strong supporter of funding the work of the IIIM through the regular budget of the United Nations. That stability is essential for the Mechanism to work efficiently and make justice a reality.

In conclusion, now more than ever, Ireland believes that the Security Council and the international community as a whole should recommit themselves to the work for accountability for the crimes committed in Syria. It is our fervent hope that that could achieve the justice that the people of Syria yearn for and so richly deserve.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): Georgia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/76/PV.65). In addition, allow me to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

I would like to thank the Head of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM), Ms. Catherine Marchi-Uhel, and her team for their valuable work and for presenting the eighth report of the Mechanism (see A/76/690). We reaffirm our and unwavering support to the indispensable work of the IIIM to assist in the investigation and prosecution of persons responsible for the most serious crimes under international law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. We also reaffirm our strong support for the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.

Georgia remains gravely concerned that, after more than a decade since the beginning of the conflict, people continue to suffer. Millions of Syrians have been internally displaced or have sought refuge. Killings, incommunicado detention and the disappearance of tens of thousands of Syrians, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, including sexual and gender-based violence, continue to this day.

Throughout the country, people are prevented from speaking freely and are at risk of being arbitrarily detained. At the same time, an absolute majority of the population lives below the poverty line.

The regime must cease attacks against civilians and civilian facilities, allow safe, unhindered and sustained humanitarian assistance to all in need, especially in north-western Syria, and cooperate fully with the IIIM, as well as the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the Investigation and Identification Team and fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The voice of Syrian people, who continue to suffer, must be heard. Impunity cannot prevail. It is therefore imperative to ensure accountability for the perpetrators of serious violations and halt abuses of human rights and international law. We will continue to strongly support the inclusion of the IIIM in the regular United Nations budget, based on the decision that this organ has taken.

Justice has to be served, and accountability for violations of international law must be ensured wherever they are committed. We join efforts with Ukraine and the international community to ensure that justice be served for the crimes that Russia is committing in the context of its ongoing unprovoked, unjustified and premeditated aggression against Ukraine. In that context, we call on Russia to immediately cease the aggression, comply with the ruling of the International Court of Justice and uphold international humanitarian law.

Mr. Sylvester (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom strongly supports the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM). Today's update highlights the importance of the IIIM's mandate — not only in gathering evidence of past crimes but in documenting ongoing human rights violations against the Syrian people.

In Syria, as in Ukraine, there can be no impunity for those who violate international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Russia's actions in Ukraine will be familiar to millions of Syrians who have suffered at the hands of the Al-Assad regime, with Moscow's backing.

The eighth report of the IIIM (see A/76/690) demonstrates the Mechanism's expertise, effectiveness and contribution to international justice. The increasing number of requests for assistance lend credence to that assessment, as do significant steps forward in delivering justice, most notably via the landmark verdict in Koblenz, Germany.

The Koblenz verdict, which benefited from the Mechanism's support, determined that crimes against humanity were committed in Syria as part of a systematic attack against the civilian population by the Al-Assad regime between April 2011 and September 2012. In doing so, the court sent a strong signal of the international community's commitment to hold perpetrators in Syria to account.

We will not relent in that task. To accelerate the United Kingdom's contribution, I am pleased to note that the United Kingdom signed a memorandum of understanding with the Mechanism on 10 March. By facilitating information-sharing with the IIIM, that agreement supports our continuing efforts to hold the Al-Assad regime to account.

We commend the Mechanism for its work on holistic and inclusive justice and thematic strategies, including on gender. Sexual and gender-based violence against women, girls, men and boys has been pervasive in Syria since the uprising in 2011.

We note the Mechanism's update on its central repository of information, welcome its continued cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and call on all States and parties to the conflict, including Syrian authorities, to cooperate with the Mechanism.

The United Kingdom reiterates its concern about the situation of tens of thousands of individuals forcibly disappeared and those missing or detained in Syria. We demand that all parties immediately cease involuntary and enforced disappearances or kidnappings, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2474 (2019) and applicable international law.

Finally, the United Kingdom fully associates itself with the Mechanism's conclusion that it has established itself as a competent and trusted partner in justice efforts concerning the crimes within its mandate. The United Kingdom is proud to work with the IIIM and its dedicated team members. We will remain at the

forefront of international efforts to hold the Syrian regime and its backers to account.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation's position on the so-called "International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011" remains unchanged.

The Syrian Arab Republic did not consent to the establishment of the Mechanism. And neither has there been any Security Council resolution on this matter under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The creation of the Mechanism was a gross violation of norms and principles of international law, including the principles of the sovereign equality of all States Members of the United Nations and non-interference in their internal affairs. When making that decision, the General Assembly clearly acted *ultra vires*, going against the distribution of powers among the main organs of the United Nations as established in the Charter.

As a result, an illegitimate entity, which in principle has no right to exist, has submitted its unsolicited reports to the Assembly year after year. We are convinced that the activities and conclusions of the Mechanism, as well as the alleged evidence it has collected, cannot be legally used in national or international criminal proceedings.

At the same time, a group of Western countries cynically pushed through the decision to fund the Mechanism from the regular budget of the United Nations, thereby shattering the tradition of consensus in the Fifth Committee. What we are witnessing today is now truly paradoxical — a toy created to serve the geopolitical ambitions of the collective West, which serves only its own interests, but with our money.

Moreover, the Mechanism is in no hurry to report on how this money is being spent. Its latest so-called report (see A/76/690) consists entirely of repetitions and general phrases. The word "superficial" can hardly do justice to the quality of the information contained therein. Member States are left to guess what the regular budget funds are being spent on.

The sources of the alleged "evidence" are not disclosed in the report, and neither are the methods of collecting and processing evidence. It is unclear

with which specific entities the Mechanism is interacting. The refusal to disclose information on the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) collaborating with the Mechanism and their structure leads us to believe that the General Assembly has participated in the creation of yet another series of fakes and spoofs, similar to what is being done by the London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

That gives rise to the following question — what evidence can be provided by bankrolled NGOs on crimes in a country they have not been to? Apparently, the same type of evidence as collected by the Mechanism itself, which explicitly states in its report that it collects information "mainly from open sources". Let me translate from bureaucratic language into plain language. In other words, the Mechanism takes Western propaganda and digests it to then produce it as "legally significant evidence". Apparently, the hope is that the mechanism's relationship with the United Nations will legitimize such materials. But I seriously doubt that it will.

In an attempt to somehow justify its existence, the Mechanism took on high-profile cases. It announced that it will soon complete work on the dossier of evidence regarding the systematic attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) against civilians and its crimes against humanity in Syria. In that regard, we should stress that Syrian law enforcement agencies are doing an excellent job of investigating ISIS crimes. Unsolicited assistance from an illegitimate Mechanism only devalues the evidence regarding ISIS atrocities. The Mechanism's working methods do not make it possible to meet the criteria for the relevance and admissibility of the evidence, rendering it completely useless in relation to national investigations.

We would like to make one further point. We do not understand how such an illegitimate entity as the Mechanism was granted access to the archives of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as is evident from its report. The Security Council, for whose benefit those archives exist, did not authorize such access. We demand that the Secretariat cease such practices. We respect the positions of delegations that are sincere in their desire to stabilize the situation in Syria, including achieving justice. However, it is important to always act in accordance with international law, that is to say, at the request of the Syrian authorities.

The Mechanism does not meet that criterion. Its establishment is a political gamble of the collective West to pursue its favourite policy of organizing regime change in yet another unwanted country. It is important to understand that any country seeking to preserve its sovereignty and independent foreign policy is unwanted by the United States of America and its satellites. It is regrettable that the world Organization has become embroiled in self-serving geopolitical games. The Mechanism is not just an unfortunate mistake of the General Assembly, misled by Western propaganda. Its very existence today is a misunderstanding and an obvious anachronism. It is time for the authors of the idea to admit that the lies replicated by the Mechanism will not lead to any regime change. We are convinced that the funds of the United Nations regular budget earmarked for the so-called investigations of the Mechanism could be put to better use.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to speakers in exercise of the right of reply, may I remind delegations that statements are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Altarsha (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation would like to exercise its right of reply regarding statements of some Member States delivered at this meeting.

The Head of the so called International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM) briefed us today (see A/76/PV.65) on the eighth report of the Mechanism (see A/76/690), which she described as a valuable report, while other colleagues described it as being in-depth, unique and a leading report. The word "valuable" was used by the Head of the IIIM because she said the report tackles illegal, humanitarian challenges that are harmful to the international community in the light of international silence concerning what is happening in Syria. She described what was taking place in Syria as atrocious. I would like to remind Ms. Marchi-Uhel of just one such atrocity that was committed by the United States occupation forces in Baghouz, in eastern Syria, in 2019.

First, should she, as Head of the Mechanism, which claims to be independent and impartial, not mention such atrocities? In her briefing, she focused on women

and children. However, more than 70 women and children were killed in the United States attack I just mentioned. Should she not have mentioned that in her report? As I said, we reject the report, and we cannot in any way accept the Mechanism's mandate.

Secondly, the Head of the Mechanism said that she cannot say for how long such heinous acts will continue in Syria. Allow me to answer that question by saying that we know when such atrocities will stop, that is, once the United States withdraws its occupation forces from Syrian territories; once it refrains from supporting terrorism and terrorists in my country; once it gives up its colonial ambitions and narrow political agendas in Syria; once it lifts its illegitimate and inhumane sanctions on the Syrian people; and once it respects our national decisions.

Thirdly, the representative of Germany said that accountability for those crimes is the least that can be done for the Syrian people. However, I have another idea. The least that they could do would be to lift the sanctions that the European Union is still imposing on the Syrian people, depriving them of their most basic human rights. The representative of Germany also called on countries to expand the jurisdiction of their national courts and legislation. He even said that his country was ready to provide support and the necessary expertise in that regard. But, of course, he did not mention a very important factor, which is the identity of the accused. Even if countries were to decide to implement the principle of national jurisdiction, which my country and other countries do not approve of, they would first have to get the blessing of a country, such as Germany, in order to consider initiating a trial, or perhaps not. It depends on the whims and political interests of some influential countries. That also applies to what my colleague the representative of Belgium said in his statement when he, too, mentioned jurisdiction. In that regard, I would like to recall what happened in 2001, when a group filed a case in Belgium. It was an important, historic case and, due to significant pressure, national legislations were amended in order to narrow international jurisdiction.

Fourthly, I will not respond to what the representative of Turkey said in his statement this morning, since I could speak for a long time about the Turkish involvement in the war against my country. However, I would like to address my colleagues by recalling that the so-called Abu Ibrahim Al-Hashimi Al-Quraishi, former leader of the terrorist group Islamic State in Iraq

and the Levant (Da'esh), was killed in Atimah, a Syrian village, that is a few kilometres from our border with Turkey; that means, under the eyes of Turkey. I leave the rest for colleagues to analyse.

(spoke in English)

As for the statement delivered by the representative of Canada, let me quote what His Excellency said earlier this morning:

“[T]here are steps we need to take to ensure that impunity does not become a way of life.”

I could not agree more. But if that were to be truly applied, it should be applied to all concerned, starting from Governments that are directly involved in the terrorist war against my country to those that funded, armed, facilitated and transferred foreign terrorist fighters to my country by opening their borders in plain view of the world.

He also spoke about collecting evidence, and if we were to assume that he is really concerned with justice, then what happened to the plethora of evidence that the Government of my country has provided to the United Nations and all Member States throughout the past 11 years? Apparently, some evidence is valid, and some is not. What are the criteria? It is the ones that those countries that have caused destruction to my country deem eligible. Talking about non-politicization is therefore so out of context.

Finally, Syria provided information to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and, the last time I checked, the OPCW was a technical organization, not a legal one. By what right did the OPCW provide that information to the so-called IIIM?

The representative of the United States spoke about violations of human rights and international law, said that his country was proud of the support that it provides to the so-called IIIM and concluded his statement by quoting Her Excellency Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield. In that same spirit, I should like to do the same and conclude my intervention by quoting the former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright. When asked if she thought that the United States war in Iraq had been worth the deaths of half a million Iraqi children, the answer was, “We think that the price was worth it”. That is the legacy of the United States and its policies around the world. I hope that my colleagues are also proud of that legacy.

The Acting President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I shall now give the floor to those representatives who have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Ghorbanpour Najafabadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): This morning we heard some criticisms regarding our comments on the working methods of the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM), which is based on the protection of confidentiality. Additionally, we heard that our legal justice system works on the basis of confidentiality, especially in the prosecution phase.

I would like to remind the Assembly that the IIIM is not a judicial body or a legal mechanism owing to the fact that the General Assembly has no mandate to create a judicial body. The IIIM is a political entity and, as such, there are serious concerns regarding the legal basis for its establishment as well as its encroachment on not only judicial matters but also its serious violations of the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic. Therefore we cannot compare it with other justice systems, whether national, regional or international.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: Today, as we were holding our discussions, the situation in Ukraine was touched upon many times, again not on topic. Some countries have made it a habit to theatrically speak about violations of international law there. Those are exactly the same countries that in contemporary history alone have started many aggressive wars.

It is at their hands that millions of ordinary people died in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya, and I could continue with that list. Please do not think that the peoples of those countries have forgotten the violence committed against them. Today the propaganda and the blatantly false information being disseminated by the Western countries about what is happening in Ukraine is no surprise. Baseless allegations are being made and lies and disinformation are propagated non-stop against my country. The real crimes are the atrocities conducted by the Kyiv regime, which are being passed over in silence.

When the various coalitions guided by the United States and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant terrorists killed civilians with impunity, at least they did not think of those people as their own, whereas the current

nationalist regime in Kyiv stands ready to kill its own nationals. The armed forces and Nazi battalions in Ukraine at all combat sites are using civilians, including the elderly, women and children, as human shields.

Humanitarian structures are being fired at, including health-care facilities, schools and residential buildings. A similar situation exists with respect to the atrocities perpetrated against detainees, both combatants and civilians, who the neo-Nazis consider to be suspicious. Not a single sponsor of the so-called European Ukraine is willing to pay attention to that, and such selective blindness bears its deadly fruit.

Several days ago, the Ukrainian military posted videos of the torture and execution of immobilized, helpless people; I think that everyone present here has seen those. Those who have not should go ahead and take a look. Then perhaps they will experience a necessary, albeit difficult, awakening in the wake of the rosy picture painted by propaganda in talking about democratic Ukraine and its heroic defendants — the very same Ukraine that they are providing with mercenaries and weapons today.

De-Nazification requires that all neo-Nazis, their supporters and military criminals be brought to justice. And that noble mission will be fulfilled.

Mr. Leschenko (Ukraine): I will be very brief. I listened carefully to the words of the representative of the Russian Federation and just wanted to ask him the following in Russian:

(spoke in Russian)

Who is currently on the territory of Ukraine? Russia and its armed forces are currently on the territory of Ukraine, and the Russian representative is attempting to paint us as criminals and accuse us of killing our own people. That is absurd.

The Acting President *(spoke in Spanish)*: The General Assembly has thus concluded the current stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 35.

I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/76/L.47.

Mr. Younis (Pakistan): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Pakistan has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/76/L.47, entitled “Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries”.

The first part of the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) was held on 17 March 2022 and adopted the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2022-2031 by consensus.

The conclusion of the Istanbul Programme of Action came at a time when the fallout of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic reversed years of hard-earned progress around the world, in particular for the LDCs. A sustainable and inclusive recovery from the pandemic will require immediate and concerted action and a new generation of revived global partnerships based on scaled-up and ambitious means of implementation.

The Doha Programme of Action, with its six key focus areas, is a step in that direction. Full implementation of the Doha Programme of Action will help the LDCs address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting negative socioeconomic impacts, return to a pathway to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, address climate-change challenges and make strides towards sustainable and irreversible graduation.

The second part of the Conference, which is to be held in Doha from 5 to 9 March 2023, will reinforce its political momentum for this action through this draft resolution.

The Acting President *(spoke in Spanish)*: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/76/L.47.

The Assembly will take a decision on draft resolution A/76/L.47 entitled “Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): The present statement pertains to paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/76/L.47 and is made in the context of rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The present statement will also be distributed to Member States.

The request contained in paragraphs 52 and 307 of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries contained in annex to draft resolution A/76/L.47 would constitute an addition to the documentation workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management in 2023 and entail additional resource requirements in the amount

of \$52,800 in 2023. In addition, the request contained in paragraph 261 would constitute an addition to the documentation workload for the Department in 2024 and entail additional resource requirements in the amount of \$26,400 in 2024. Detailed cost estimates and their underlying assumptions for the requirements will be provided in the annex to this statement.

Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/76/L.47, additional resource requirements estimated in the amount of \$52,800, under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs and Conference Management, would be included in the proposed programme budget for 2023 for consideration by the Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. Furthermore, additional resource requirements estimated in the amount of \$26,400 under the same section would be included in the proposed programme budget for 2024 for consideration by the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Delegations are informed that it is no longer possible to sponsor the draft resolution through the electronic platform.

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.47, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors: Canada, Kazakhstan and Turkey.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/76/L.47?

Draft resolution A/76/L.47 was adopted (resolution 76/258).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now give the floor to members who wish to make statements of position after the adoption of resolution 76/258.

Mrs. Chimbiri Molande (Malawi): We are extremely delighted that the General Assembly has adopted the Doha Programme of Action by consensus (resolution 76/258).

Collectively, we mark a historical moment for the 46 least developed countries (LDCs) of the world.

Today's adoption sets the beginning of a decade to bring a transformative change in the lives of 1.4 billion people in the world. It gives us hope that the most marginalized segment of the global community is not forgotten. The international community has pledged in unequivocal terms to eliminate the suffering of the poorest of the poor.

Today the General Assembly has adopted a global compact that is highly ambitious, communicates the aspirations of LDCs, is built on a shared responsibility between LDCs and their development partners, has charted out a comprehensive action agenda and aims to steer a rapid recovery from the pandemic, build resilience and foster the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in LDCs.

On behalf of LDCs, let me put on record my deepest gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for facilitating the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action and supporting all related processes. I also thank our development partners for being at this meeting today and for demonstrating their extraordinary support, flexibility and solidarity throughout the process.

The implementation of the Doha Programme of Action is acutely needed, as we are living in an extraordinary and uncharted situation. Our countries are struggling to recover from the multifaceted impacts of the coronavirus disease pandemic. The reversals of development gains, record inflation, rising interest rates and unmanageable debt burdens have already paralysed our economies.

The war in Ukraine has added fuel to the flames. Commodity prices are spiking and are on track to hit a record since 1970. Wheat prices are up by 60 per cent since February. Oil prices have surged to their highest price since 2008. Food prices are now higher than during the global food crisis of 2008. Those factors are all severely affecting the 46 LDCs.

Now is the time to adopt a strategy and systematic approach by all actors to begin the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action. We call upon the United Nations development system to invest all available tools and resources to implement the programme at all levels and at the leadership of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Let me reiterate the call made by Mr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi, as Chair of LDCs in this Hall on 17 March.

“Crucially, I call upon our development partners to go beyond fulfilling their commitments and also be responsible to the pressing needs that are created within LDCs by unforeseen events.”

I also echo my President and call upon the United Nations leadership to strengthen the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. Not only has that Office been instrumental in driving the progress we have made so far but, as we move towards implementation, its workload has also increased.

Finally, I urge all Member States to remain fully engaged and extend their full support to the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action. We express our profound thanks and appreciation to the Government of Qatar for its continued support to the fifth United Nations Conference on the LDCs and its preparatory process. We are also convinced that Qatar will support the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action.

Let me conclude by appealing to Member States to secure the participation of their Heads of State and Government at the second part of the conference, to be held in Doha from 5 to 9 March 2023.

Mr. Shen Xiaokai (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China supports the adoption of resolution 76/258, introduced by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, which provides a procedural endorsement of the Doha Programme of Action adopted by the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

China hopes that the second part of the conference will be held as a scheduled and achieve more outcomes conducive to the sustainable development of the least developed countries (LDCs). As China pointed out during the first part of the conference, on 17 March, debt relief is a very complex and sensitive issue. China still has concerns and reservations about the paragraphs concerning debt relief in the Doha Programme of Action.

China believes that the wording on debt relief used in the Doha Programme of Action is too broad and vague and fails to accurately reflect the commitments

of the international community on the debt issue and is not conducive to helping LDCs ease the debt burden at the operational level. To ensure real benefits for LDCs, China believes that formulations such as “debt suspension” or “debt treatment”, as contained in the Debt Service Suspension Initiative of the Group of 20 and the Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, which reflects international consensus, should be used.

While taking a conscientious and a responsible approach, China has decided to disassociate itself from formulations concerning debt relief in paragraphs 29, 206 and 264 of the Doha Programme of Action.

Mr. Varganov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation did not object to the consensus adoption of resolution 76/258, on the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). As a responsible member of the international community, my country understands the importance of the new Programme of Action for the interests of the socioeconomic development of that group of countries.

At the same time, we would like to underscore that a whole number of provisions in the Programme were adopted without taking into account a several positions of a number of countries. We would like to reiterate our position that we voiced at the first stage of the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, on 17 March.

The Russian delegation is of the view that the Doha Programme of Action does not actually reflect the consensus and ignores the agreed decisions and agreements that were taken within the United Nations. The document welcomes controversial concepts and terms. Given that, the Russian delegation disassociates itself from paragraphs 3, 98, 104, 105 and 116, the goals of section III (b) on energy and paragraph 221.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting. We have also heard the last speaker for this item.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 23.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.