



General Assembly

Seventy-sixth session

82nd plenary meeting
Friday, 10 June 2022, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Gastorn (Tanzania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 115 (continued)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of members of the Economic and Social Council

The Acting President: Since no candidate obtained the required two-thirds majority in the previous ballot, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern European States. We shall therefore proceed to a second, restricted ballot. In accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure, this round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected but obtained the largest numbers of votes in the previous unrestricted ballot, namely, North Macedonia and the Russian Federation.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting. We shall now begin the voting process.

The ballot papers will now be distributed. The voting has thus begun. Members are requested to place an X in the box next to the name printed on the ballot paper. There should not be more than one checked box for the

vacancy to be filled. A ballot will be declared invalid if both boxes are checked. If a ballot paper contains any notations other than a vote in favour of an eligible Member State, those notations will be disregarded.

At the invitation of the Acting President, the representatives of Algeria, Ecuador, Hungary, Monaco, Mozambique and Timor-Leste acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The Acting President: May I request delegations that have not yet voted to do so now by approaching the front of the Hall to cast their votes?

The voting is now closed. No more ballot papers will be accepted. In the interests of time, the General Assembly will now proceed to consider agenda item 124 while the ballots are being counted.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 115.

Agenda item 124 (continued)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Special report of the Security Council (A/76/853)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 124, entitled “Strengthening of the United Nations system”, to continue the debate pursuant to resolution 76/262, of

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26 April 2022, on the situation in which the veto was cast by two permanent members at the 9048th meeting of the Security Council, on 26 May 2022, under the agenda item entitled “Non-proliferation — Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”.

Ms. Baptista Grade Zacarias (Portugal): I am taking the floor at the end of a long list of speakers, but I cannot remain silent. I have to add my voice to the many others that have underlined the relevance of today’s debate. For the first time, we are making use of a mechanism meant to strengthen the United Nations system and ensure accountability between the Security Council and the General Assembly. As a sponsor of the veto initiative, we believe that this debate is fundamental. We would therefore like to encourage Council members to enclose the special report of the Security Council (A/76/853) in the next Security Council annual report, together with a summary of this debate. And while it is welcome, this debate is one we would rather not have. The recent use of the veto by some members blocked the Council’s response and hampered it in fulfilling its primary responsibility for international peace and security (see S/PV.9048). It also sent a flawed message to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, implying that it can continue to develop its illegal activities with total impunity.

Portugal condemns the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s nuclear and ballistic programmes. We remain deeply concerned about its repeated and unprecedented tests, which violate Council resolutions, undermining both the global non-proliferation regime and the entire international rules-based order. The international community has a role to play, for instance in implementing the sanctions agreed on, not as an end per se, but as a means to constrain the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s unlawful activities. The international community also has a role to play in ensuring that the necessary humanitarian assistance reaches the people of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, provided that Pyongyang grants access to that assistance.

But there are some actions that only the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea can and must undertake. They include ceasing all its illegal and destabilizing actions; complying with the relevant resolutions of the Council; abandoning all nuclear-weapon programmes and any other programmes of weapons of mass destruction; signing and ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; returning to the Treaty on

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards regime; and last but not least, resuming dialogue with the relevant parties — because the only solution is a diplomatic one.

If I had to draw one conclusion from this debate, it would be that there is one forum for many voices to be heard, and that is the Assembly. But there is also a forum in which we should try to speak with one voice when it comes to peace and security — and that is the Council. Let us all assume our different and shared responsibilities in order to ensure the stability of the Korean peninsula, the security of the wider region and the peace of the entire world.

Mr. Al-Ali (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): The United Arab Emirates appreciates the convening of today’s debate under the mechanism established by resolution 76/262, which aims to enhance transparency in the work of the Security Council and provides an opportunity for a wider exchange of views following the use of the veto in the Council.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has launched at least 26 ballistic missiles, including intercontinental ones, since the beginning of this year, in violation of resolutions of the Council. The United Arab Emirates strongly condemns those repeated violations and provocations by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. On 5 June alone, it launched eight ballistic missiles from three different locations, putting neighbouring countries and the wider region at immediate risk and threatening regional and international peace and security. In that regard, we underscore that proliferation anywhere in the world undermines our collective security.

The United Arab Emirates supported draft resolution S/2022/431, put forward by the United States in the Security Council on 26 May, based on our steadfast position regarding non-proliferation and in the light of repeated violations of previous Council resolutions by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Based on that, the United Arab Emirates remains firm in its commitment to working with all members of the Council to ensure their supportive response, pursuant to its mandate. The Council is strong when it is united. Now is the time to find common ground that can enable the Council to fulfil its primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security and address the threats

resulting from actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Vongnorkeo (Lao People's Democratic Republic): The situation on the Korean peninsula remains delicate, with long-standing historical complexities that will demand concerted efforts on the part of all concerned if mutual trust and confidence are to be restored, ultimately leading to political and diplomatic solutions to the current challenges. As a peace-loving nation, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is party to several international instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, among others. In that connection, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has consistently maintained a policy geared to the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates its unwavering support for peace, security and denuclearization on the Korean peninsula and the settlement of disputes through peaceful means and constructive dialogue, in order to contribute to the maintenance of regional and global peace and security. For that reason, the Lao People's Democratic Republic urges the international community to continue working to create an environment that is conducive to advancing diplomatic negotiations and refraining from any action that could escalate the tensions. We urge all Member States to redouble their efforts to implement all relevant initiatives and international instruments, including resolutions of the Security Council.

Ms. Shmat (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Let me start by saying that we are meeting here today as a result of deep-rooted problems and contradictions that exist among the permanent members of the Security Council. We view with extreme scepticism the possibility that today's meeting can resolve the situation on the Korean peninsula or even bring us any closer to settling it in the current circumstances. Instead of confronting the root causes of those contradictions, the impossibility of achieving consensus in the Council and the reasons for its permanent members' unwillingness to compromise, we are meeting here today to express our opinion on an issue on the Council's agenda.

We decided to dissociate ourselves from resolution 76/262, entitled "Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council", as it is very clear to us that the Assembly's duplication of an issue on the agenda of the Council, the main body mandated to maintain international peace and security, only dilutes the Council's mandate and undermines its role. It may seem that we oppose discussing any of the agendas of the main United Nations bodies in the General Assembly, which is not at all the case. It is certainly not a bad idea. But we should be realistic and ask ourselves whether that is possible. A newly created mechanism would inevitably require time, funding and personnel from within the United Nations system. Furthermore, resolution 76/262, which is the basis for our meeting here today, was drafted without an open, inclusive and transparent discussion of the document itself.

Regarding the use of the veto, we are compelled to note once again that the veto should not be seen as a privilege of a few countries. The right of the veto is part of the permanent member countries' exclusive responsibility in matters concerning the maintenance of international peace and security. It is part of the Charter of the United Nations and serves as an important tool for reaching the balanced decisions that global peace and security are dependent on.

Returning to the substantive part of the meeting, we were pleased with the detailed explanations provided by the delegations of Russia and China, which exercised their legitimate right to veto the Council's draft resolution S/2022/431. Non-proliferation and disarmament continue to be key issues in the maintenance of peace and security. Belarus shares the concerns of the international community about the situation on the Korean peninsula. However, we have to acknowledge that attempts to resolve the conflict through a tougher sanctions regime are clearly futile. What we need to do is seek comprehensive solutions to this protracted conflict aimed at de-escalating the situation in the region.

Mrs. Bartley (Samoa): I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to share our views on the important matter before us and to exercise and test the veto initiative, as adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 76/262). Samoa stands in solidarity with the Member States that have condemned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's latest launching of an intercontinental ballistic missile and other ballistic missiles. We view that action

as a direct violation of Security Council resolutions. We therefore call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from further provocations that could destabilize the region.

As members of a family of nations committed to upholding the principles of peace and security, we must act collectively for the good of all, not just a few. The view of the majority must prevail, because the alternative is paralysis and inaction in our cherished multilateral system. Samoa therefore strongly urges all Council members to abide by the Council's decisions, respect their obligations and act accordingly, with commitment and full transparency.

In conclusion, Samoa, like many small island developing States, looks to the collective wisdom of the members of the Security Council to lead us and put us on a path of peace, security and prosperity, and for the Council to be an effective body in that regard.

Mr. Ke (Cambodia): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the President for convening today's meeting to debate the special report of the Security Council (A/76/853) in accordance with resolution 76/262. Cambodia is deeply concerned about the recent developments on the Korea peninsula, in particular the ballistic-missile launches there, which not only violate Security Council resolutions but also undermine multilateral efforts to promote an environment of peace and stability in the region and the world. We urge all the parties concerned to exercise the greatest possible restraint, refrain from taking any further counterproductive actions that could lead to a further escalation of tensions in the region and resume dialogue in order to find an enduring solution to the conflict and promote the necessary conditions for creating an environment that is conducive to the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, for the sake of the peace and security of the region and the well-being of its people.

Cambodia is also concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, owing to the effects of sanctions and the coronavirus disease pandemic, which have undermined the country's social and economic progress and its implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Drawing on lessons learned from the past, we have seen that sanctions and unilateral coercive measures do not help to resolve conflicts but rather have a negative effect on innocent lives.

Ms. Cerrato (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Honduras condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launching of ballistic missiles in the vicinity of Japan's exclusive economic zone, jeopardizing the region's peace and security and flagrantly violating the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. In that regard, Honduras urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respond positively to the calls for dialogue aimed at establishing peace on the Korean peninsula, and to cooperate with the international community in order to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of the coronavirus disease outbreak and provide assistance to its people.

It is important to point out that the Member States have mandated the Security Council with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and that the use of the veto should therefore be exercised with due regard for that responsibility. We urge the Council to comply with its duties in that regard. In conclusion, the Government of Honduras reiterates its commitment and support to all efforts and initiatives for ensuring peace, security and non-aggression in the region and the world, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Acting President: As the counting of ballots has been completed for the election of the members of the Economic and Social Council, I will now briefly suspend the Assembly's consideration of agenda item 124.

Agenda item 115 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of members of the Economic and Social Council

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

<i>Group C — Eastern European States</i>	
Number of ballot papers:	184
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	184
Abstentions:	2
Number of members voting:	182
Required two-thirds majority:	122
Number of votes obtained:	
Russian Federation	174
North Macedonia	82

The Acting President: The ballot has again been inconclusive. There still remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern European States. We shall therefore proceed to a third restricted ballot. In accordance with rule 94 of the Assembly's rules of procedure, this fourth round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Eastern European States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes in the previous unrestricted ballot, namely, North Macedonia and the Russian Federation.

Before we begin the voting process, I would like to remind members that pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting. We shall now begin the voting process.

The ballot papers will now be distributed. The voting has thus begun. Members are requested to put an X in the box next to the name printed on the ballot paper. There should not be more than one checked box for the vacancy to be filled. A ballot will be declared invalid if both boxes are checked. If a ballot paper contains any notations other than a vote in favour of an eligible Member State, they will be disregarded.

At the invitation of the Acting President, the representatives of Algeria, Ecuador, Hungary, Monaco, Mozambique and Timor-Leste acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The Acting President: The voting is now closed. No more ballot papers will be accepted. In the interests of time, the General Assembly will now continue its consideration of agenda item 124 while the ballots are being counted.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 115.

Agenda item 124 (continued)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Special report of the Security Council (A/76/853)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 124, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system",

to continue the debate pursuant to resolution 76/262, of 26 April 2022, on the situation in which the veto was cast by two permanent members at the 9048th meeting of the Security Council, held on 26 May 2022, under the agenda item entitled "Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea".

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): Slovakia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its member States (see A/76/PV.77), and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Slovakia strongly condemns the unprecedented series of ballistic-missile tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea since the beginning of this year. They are in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and demonstrate the country's continued efforts to expand and further develop its ballistic-missile capabilities, which is a very worrisome development. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's pursuit of illegal weapon systems is a threat to international peace and security and goes against the international efforts to resume dialogue and engage in actions to help its people — which is where our focus should largely be. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should comply with its obligations under the Council's resolutions and refrain from any action that undermines the environment for pursuing diplomacy and dialogue.

Slovakia firmly believes that it was essential for the Council to take measures through the adoption of a new resolution in the light of the rapid and illegal development of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and missile activities. It is therefore deeply regrettable that the veto was exercised against Security Council draft resolution S/2022/431 (see S/PV.9048). We want to highlight the importance of the unity of the international community, including the Council, in addressing that serious challenge.

The Security Council and the international community cannot afford to turn a blind eye to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and missile development. Its nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes are not only diverting resources from essential investment in social and economic development and reform, but are consuming them even in a period of what appears to be a severe coronavirus disease outbreak in the country, when those resources would be of benefit to its general population. We also believe that it is vital to end the obstructionism

regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the Council and support a more responsible attitude to the protection of international peace and security from the significant threat posed by the country's nuclear and ballistic-missile development.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The United Nations, the General Assembly and the Security Council must play a positive and constructive role in the process of finding peaceful solutions to conflicts between States. The actions of the United Nations must contribute to de-escalating or preventing the escalation of any situations that threaten international peace and security.

We have consistently stated that multilateral measures should be taken at the international level to mitigate the negative effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic, starting with an immediate end to unilateral coercive measures, which are illegal actions that are affecting nations whose populations together total more than 200 million people and which in the context of the pandemic have the same level of illegality as crimes against humanity. That is why we recognize the endurance and strength of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who have endeavoured to live their lives fully in spite of the unjust siege of their country represented by such illegal unilateral coercive measures and other so-called sanctions. We also recognize the right to sovereignty, culture and life based on paths freely chosen by every country and people of the world, as well as their right to protect their security and defend peace.

The Government of Reconciliation and National Unity of Nicaragua emphasizes its adherence to the principles of peace, solidarity, respect for international law and the right of the peoples of the world to live in peace and development. We have always supported the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula through dialogue and close communication between the authorities of both parties, as well as civil exchanges and measures for eradicating military tensions, taking into account the legitimate concerns of all parties. Our Government will continue to urge the parties concerned to return to a path of dialogue and negotiation in order to de-escalate and arrive at a peaceful solution as soon as possible so as to build peace, stability, security, welfare, development and the reunification of the greater Korean peninsula.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): Pakistan has consistently supported the efforts to promote peace and stability in and around the Korean peninsula through dialogue and negotiations, as envisaged in bilateral and multilateral agreements endorsed by the Security Council. That dialogue should be aimed at ensuring equal security for all States in a denuclearized Korean peninsula. Pakistan remains opposed to any destabilizing actions that could give rise to tensions on the peninsula. We call for adherence to the relevant Council resolutions, mutual restraint on the part of all sides and a revival of the interrupted six-party negotiation process as soon as possible. Pakistan also takes note of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, especially in the wake of the coronavirus disease pandemic, and calls for humanitarian assistance for those in need, irrespective of political considerations. It is our view that both security and humanitarian challenges can best be addressed through dialogue and diplomacy. An approach based on constructive engagement may yield more productive results.

Mr. Pedrosa Cuesta (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): On 26 April in the General Assembly the Cuban delegation expressed its concerns and interpretations regarding resolution 76/262, entitled "Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council" (see A/76/PV.69). Today, as the new mechanism established by that resolution is being activated for the first time, we reiterate that the Council cannot limit itself to submitting special reports only in cases where the veto has been used. That would be a clearly restrictive and selective approach to the provisions established in Article 15, paragraph 1, and Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations. We also reaffirm that if we are to achieve the deep and comprehensive reform of the Council reform that is so urgently needed, the veto should not be considered separately from the rest of the issues under the mandate of the intergovernmental negotiating group on Security Council reform established in Assembly decision 62/557.

In the context of the multiple crises currently facing humankind, whose effects have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the imposition of sanctions worsens the situation in countries that are already dealing with socioeconomic and humanitarian problems. The sanctions-based paradigm of the United States and its policy of maximum pressure are obstacles

to the dialogue process on the situation on the Korean peninsula and intensify the tensions and security problems in the region. Imposing new sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would further exacerbate the negative humanitarian impact that those measures have had on the population, given that they are already an obstacle to effectively tackling the pandemic and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We firmly condemn the unilateral coercive measures imposed on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which have worsened its people's economic and humanitarian situation. We reaffirm our belief that in order to live in peace, humankind must respect international law and the Charter. We need more dialogue and international cooperation, not more sanctions. We call on all States to refrain from actions that do not contribute to the goal of denuclearization but rather further complicate the tense situation in the region.

We reiterate our support for the total denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, without foreign interference, in full respect for the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of the States involved and with strict adherence to the principle of refraining from the use or threat of use of force. We reaffirm Cuba's commitment to peace and multilateralism. The only way to achieve peace and stability on the Korean peninsula is by engaging in dialogue and negotiations aimed at a lasting political solution and taking into account the legitimate concerns of all the parties involved.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the Kingdom of Bahrain stresses its consistent policy in support of efforts to dismantle weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including nuclear weapons and their various means of delivery. We also emphasize strengthening cooperation with the international community and the competent authorities in limiting significant risks of nuclear proliferation and WMDs, as well as addressing their threats to humankind.

Bahrain has been following the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's actions in conducting a number of missile tests since September 2021, including launching an intercontinental ballistic missile in March of this year. In that connection, we would like to emphasize the importance of adhering to international law, including the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. We also hope that the parties concerned will seek a peaceful diplomatic solution that can ensure the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean

peninsula and establish a comprehensive and lasting peace between the two Koreas.

The Kingdom of Bahrain reiterates its call to the international community to adopt a unified global strategy to limit the spread of nuclear weapons and other WMDs through an effective mechanism for the global and regional disarmament of such weapons in order to strengthen efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Ms. Bassols Delgado (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain subscribes to the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its member States on 8 June (see A/76/PV.77).

As today's meeting comes to a close, we want to welcome its convening, which activated resolution 76/262 of 26 April for the first time. Spain was one of the 83 countries that sponsored the resolution, which we did in our belief that it would open up a new dimension of transparency in which all Member States would have the opportunity to express their positions on every use of the veto in the Security Council.

Maintaining international peace and security is the duty of all the States Members of our Organization. The General Assembly cannot stand idly by in the face of threats or acts that undermine international peace and security when the Council is prevented from acting owing to the use of the veto by any of its permanent members. In the first half of this year the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted more than 30 ballistic-missile tests, including one of an intercontinental ballistic missile, and we do not know what the next six months will bring. Meanwhile, it has continued to develop its nuclear programme. The International Atomic Energy Agency's Director General recently announced that the country is reportedly preparing a new nuclear test, in line with its announced policy to advance its nuclear programme as much as possible. All of that is being done in flagrant violation of repeated resolutions of the Council and in a permanent challenge to the maintenance of international peace and security in general and collective security in particular, including in the context of this year's tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Despite the fact that Security Council draft resolution S/2022/431 had the support of 13 members of the Council, the vetoes cast by the Russian Federation and China prevented its adoption and its condemnation

of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Had it been adopted, the resolution would have made it possible to implement effective additional sanctions, which I should point out are perfectly in line with Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. The blocked draft resolution also considered the country's needs on the humanitarian and food fronts as well as for combating the coronavirus disease pandemic.

The Council's failure to deliver an appropriate response on 26 May has not been without consequences. Pyongyang has stepped up its provocations, with a new record on 5 June of eight ballistic missiles launched in a single day. Spain urges the Pyongyang authorities to reconsider their current course of action and put an immediate end to their nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes, which violate multiple consensus resolutions of the Council adopted since 2006 and run counter to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's pursuit of its current policy will only elicit its further rejection and isolation from the international community.

We urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to heed the calls for it to engage fully in good-faith political dialogue, with the ultimate goal of the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. That dialogue should be conducive to building a collective security framework for the country's neighbours and the region in general, to the benefit of us all. We urge the Council to continue its efforts in that regard. In particular, we call on the Russian Federation and China to join in the unanimous condemnation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's attitude, which undermines the international regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and effectively compels the responsible members of the international community to act.

The use of the veto represents the failure of the Security Council to fulfil its primary function — the maintenance of international peace and security — and its ability to act in the face of the most serious violations of the Charter and international law. The veto should not be a substitute for dialogue. In the face of the new acts of provocation in violation of the non-proliferation regime, it is essential to resume the dialogue in the Council and work to adopt a new consensus draft resolution on that matter.

Finally, as everyone here is aware, Spain supports a reform of the Charter that abolishes the right of the veto. That has been our position since 2008. We believe that we must move towards a United Nations that responds to the demands and challenges of the twenty-first century, in which there is more substantial equality among Members and an elimination of privileges. As we work in that direction, Spain, as a co-signatory of the political declaration on the suspension of veto powers in the event of mass atrocities, encourages all Member States that have not yet done so to join it.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia): I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting, the first of its kind following the adoption of resolution 76/262. That resolution is of significant importance as a new mechanism for enhancing transparency and accountability and strengthening the engagement of the whole membership in discussions on maintaining international peace and security. While re-emphasizing the importance of the role of the Security Council, we believe this mechanism marks a new step in the constructive relationship between the Council and the General Assembly.

Tunisia reiterates its steadfast support for the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. In that context, Tunisia reaffirms its commitment to the full implementation of all Security Council resolutions pertaining to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, as well as its support for all efforts to achieve the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

We deeply regret the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's recent missile tests and urge it to refrain from any new tests and fully abide by its international obligations. We also reiterate our call for the swift resumption of dialogue and negotiations for complete and verifiable denuclearization. It is also of crucial importance that the Council again be able to speak with one voice on this issue and engage constructively for the adoption of a forward-looking consensus outcome.

Tunisia remains concerned about the humanitarian situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's, which even before the coronavirus pandemic was extremely grave. We share the view that improving that situation can contribute to the promotion of peace, stability and prosperity on the Korean peninsula and the whole region.

We also believe that adequately addressing the issue of abducted nationals can only reinforce trust

and cooperation in the region. In that regard, we encourage the resumption of dialogue in order to reach a satisfactory and definitive solution to that sensitive issue as soon as possible.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in this debate.

As the counting of ballots has been completed for the election of the members of the Economic and Social Council, I will now briefly suspend the Assembly's consideration of agenda item 124.

Agenda item 115 (continued)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of members of the Economic and Social Council

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows.

Group C — Eastern European States	
Number of ballot papers:	185
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	184
Abstentions:	2
Number of Members voting:	182
Required two-thirds majority:	122
Number of votes obtained:	
Russian Federation:	100
North Macedonia:	82

Since no candidate obtained the required two-thirds majority in the previous ballot, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern European States. We shall therefore proceed to the first unrestricted ballot. In accordance with rule 94 of the rules of the procedure, this fifth round of balloting shall be unrestricted. May I remind the Assembly that any Member State from among the Eastern European States may be a candidate, except those who will remain members of the Economic and Social Council as of 1 January 2023, as well as those who were already elected for a term beginning on 1 January 2023. The following members can therefore not be voted for in the present ballot: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on

the actual conduct of the voting. We shall now begin the voting process.

The ballot papers will now be distributed. The voting has thus begun. Members are requested to place an "X" in the box next to the name printed on the ballot paper or to write the name of another eligible State on the blank line. If the box next to the name of a State is checked, the name of that State does not have to be repeated on the blank line. There should not be more than one checked box or handwritten name for the vacancy to be filled. Accordingly, members can check only one box or write one name of an eligible State from among the Eastern European States in the space provided.

If the ballot paper contains a vote for a Member State that will remain a member of the Economic and Social Council as of 1 January 2023 or that was already elected for a term beginning on 1 January 2023, the ballot paper will be declared invalid. Finally, if a ballot paper contains any notation other than a vote in favour of an eligible Member State, those notations will be disregarded.

At the invitation of the Acting President, the representatives of Algeria, Ecuador, Hungary, Monaco, Mozambique and Timor-Leste acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The Acting President: In the interest of time, while the ballots are being counted, the General Assembly will continue with the plenary meeting to take up agenda item 124.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 115.

Agenda item 124 (continued)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

The Acting President: The General Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 124, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system", to continue the debate, pursuant to resolution 76/262 of 26 April 2022, on the situation as to which the veto was cast by two permanent members of the Security Council at its 9048th meeting, on 26 May 2022, under the agenda item entitled "Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea".

Mr. Hitti (Lebanon): Strengthening the United Nations system must remain a common objective, especially at a time when the multilateral rules-based order continues to be severely tested. That holds true particularly for small countries, such as mine, that often regard the Charter of the United Nations as a shield for protection. In times like these, the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter should continue to guide us, and we must strive to build more effective multilateralism.

It is in that spirit that Lebanon co-sponsored resolution 76/262, which was adopted by consensus in the Assembly Hall only few weeks ago. The mechanism put in place by that resolution constitutes an important step towards further accountability, transparency and an enhanced role for the General Assembly.

One cannot ignore the fact that the veto, or the threat of use of the veto, has often undermined attempts to settle conflict and bring about genuine progress towards achieving peace. That has often been one of the main criticisms levelled at the Security Council.

For the first time, today's debate provides an opportunity for the wider membership to discuss pressing matters pertaining to international peace and security in a situation as to which the veto was cast. In that regard, we are encouraged by the significant level of participation in today's debate. It testifies to the commitment of the members of the General Assembly, irrespective of their positions, to engage in this necessary dialogue.

Lebanon has consistently advocated the peaceful settlement of disputes, and therefore calls for prioritizing diplomacy and a political solution on the Korean peninsula on the basis of international law, including the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

As a staunch supporter of nuclear disarmament, Lebanon continues to call for universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its entry into force. We also look forward to the upcoming tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in August. That Conference will serve as another test of our multilateral rules-based order, and it is our hope that we can prove our commitment to it.

Mr. Zambrana Torrelío (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this meeting, which we consider to be of

high importance due to the latest developments on the Korean peninsula.

Bolivia, a pacifist country, calls for the complete, verifiable and irreversible abandonment of all nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and for full compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We urge the parties involved to avoid escalating tensions that jeopardize international peace and security, especially on the Korean peninsula. We also call on them to avoid any act of provocation or unilateral action, as well as any action that runs counter to international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Bolivia reiterates its firm rejection of the implementation of sanctions, which are not an end in themselves. They constitute a flagrant violation of international law, as they are illegal measures that extend the jurisdiction and internal legislation of one State over another, thereby violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

Furthermore, we call on the Security Council to comply with its mandate and initiate efforts to bring the parties concerned back to the negotiating table to resume dialogue and avoid the escalation of tensions in the region.

Finally, the Plurinational State of Bolivia rejects any alternative military solution or threat of the use of force and encourages the resumption of dialogue and negotiations in order to reach a peaceful diplomatic and political solution that will lead to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in this debate.

The exercise of the right of reply has been requested. I would like to remind members that statements in the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ghadirkhomi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I take the floor to exercise our right of reply in response to the statement made by representative of Israel at this morning's meeting (see A/76/PV.81).

It is ironic that a regime famous for its atrocities, apartheid policies and war crimes — which are well documented by various United Nations organs and agencies — can allow itself to continue making false accusation against others. I have no intention of

dignifying the Israeli representative's claims with a substantive response. However, I would like to reiterate the following points.

As per our earlier statement under this item and as one of the original signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Islamic Republic of Iran has been, and continues to be, a staunch supporter of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In 1974, Iran proposed the idea of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and has worked hard since then to realize that novel initiative.

My country, like many countries in the Middle East region, is gravely concerned about Israel's dangerous policy of pursuing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities, as well as its direct involvement in terrorist actions. The regime's nuclear arsenal, according to multiple reports, comprises 400 warheads, including thermonuclear weapons. It possesses chemical and biological weapons and is working hard to develop those deadly weapons. It has access to all weapons of mass destruction delivery systems and has often threatened the countries of the region with nuclear annihilation.

The Israeli regime has refused to adhere to any WMD, disarmament or control regimes, despite repeated international calls for it to join the NPT and accept the comprehensive safeguards agreement and submit its nuclear programmes for inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency. It has declined to take part in two initiatives to establish a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

In contrast, that apartheid regime has launched various terrorist attacks against Iranian scientists and sabotaged Iran's nuclear facilities using physical and cyberattacks, in addition to its brutal attacks against the innocent and defenceless people of Palestine and its expansionist policies against neighbouring countries. Israel, as the last apartheid regime and the only one in the world to openly practise racism, is the only perpetrator in the world that has committed all core crimes under international law, including genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and aggression.

The regime's atrocities and terrorist acts must not be overlooked. In that regard, the Security Council has a special responsibility to counter the ongoing threats to international peace and security emanating from that dangerous regime.

In conclusion, I categorically reject the outrageous and unsubstantiated accusations made by the representative of the Israeli regime against my country, which are consistent with its wolf cry of deception and policy of deflection from its atrocities in the region and beyond. I should emphasize that weapons of mass destruction in the hands of such a criminal regime are the true source of terror, insecurity and disruption putting regional peace and security at risk. We encourage the international community to condemn the Israeli regime and force it to adhere to the international regimes banning WMDs.

Mr. Altarsha (Syrian Arab Republic): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in response to what was mentioned in the statement made by the Israeli representative earlier today (see A/76/PV.81).

It is ironic that the representative of the Israeli delegation made a statement denouncing the use of the veto in the Security Council, while Western countries have used the veto for decades in Israel's interests in order to cover up its aggressive practices and repeated crimes against the peoples under occupation. Such use of the veto has provided Israel with an umbrella of Western immunity from accountability, which has enabled it to escape with impunity and continue its crimes and attacks, including the ongoing acts of aggression against my country, Syria.

As members may be aware, at dawn today Israel launched an aerial act of aggression targeting several locations in Syria, including Damascus International Airport, causing civilian casualties and huge material losses. Those attacks reflect a dangerous escalatory approach that increases the level of threats and challenges facing regional and international peace and security. It also sets a clear example of Israel's disregard for the Charter of the United Nations and international law, while contravening all resolutions of international legitimacy related to the situation in the Middle East.

The statement made by the Israeli delegation today was aimed at diverting attention from the real threat to international peace and security, namely, Israel's possession of an arsenal of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction. Israel has no right to talk about disarmament issues and accuse others, because its record in that context is full of violations of the foundations of the non-proliferation regime, in defiance of the will of the international

community. Again, that has all been covered by the umbrella of immunity provided to Israel by some Western countries in the Security Council.

Mr. Kim In Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation categorically and totally rejects the groundless allegations by Israel against my country.

As a responsible State, the Democratic Republic of Korea remains firmly committed to non-proliferation. The reckless allegation by Israel is nothing more than a last-ditch effort to deceive the international community and divert attention from its heinous crimes of proliferation and atrocities in the region. The United States and Western countries are alarmingly conniving and are patronizing the nuclear ambitions and terrorist acts of Israel. That is really a typical example of double standards. Israel is indeed a cancer on peace in the Middle East, as well as a rogue State that undermines the international non-proliferation regime and commits all kinds of terrorist acts. Any attempt to encroach upon the sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to provoke its dignity will never be in the interests of Israel.

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

Agenda item 11 (continued)

Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the political declarations on HIV/AIDS

Report of the Secretary-General (A/76/783)

Mr. Imanuel (Indonesia): HIV/AIDS remains a great challenge to the global community and to our collective endeavours in achieving sustainable development that leaves no one behind. The report of the Secretary-General (A/76/783) has made it clear that HIV/AIDS continues to pose inequalities within and among countries.

Against that background, we believe that efforts must be enhanced to curb the rate of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths. Relevant to that, I would like to emphasize three points.

First, harmonized and comprehensive policies and programmes are foundational. A commitment and work to prevent new HIV infections and deaths caused by AIDS must be implemented in an integrated manner

from the highest political level to the community level. That principle has been a core basis of our policies on HIV/AIDS.

Our policies at the national, subnational and community levels are guided by a comprehensive and harmonized national plan of action on HIV/AIDS covering the period 2020 to 2024. The national plan of action sets out steps to integrate policies and initiatives at the national, local and community levels to ensure the realization of policies into accurate and contextual actions. One good result that we witnessed from that approach is the development of cities' capacities in that matter. Central Jakarta is one of the cities in Indonesia where innovations are evident. In the city, technological innovation has connected people living with HIV with the appropriate and needed health services.

Through online delivery services, the number of people reached by antiretroviral therapy has increased by more than 30 per cent. That good achievement was then shared as a good experience by the government of the city with other cities in countries of South-East Asia.

Secondly, multi-stakeholders and multisectoral approaches are imperative. While the political commitment and the leadership of Governments are essential, multi-stakeholder and multisectoral collaborations also play a significant role. In our policies, the involvement of academia, the private sector and civil society continues to be an integral part. Highlighted in our national action plan on HIV/AIDS, their meaningful participation, among other things, has supported our efforts in raising awareness and providing needed and appropriate services, as well as in sustaining financial resources. The Government also established, and keeps strengthening the role of, the National Commission on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Management, which is comprised of aligned ministries and agencies from diverse, but relevant, sectors — from the health, education, social development, family planning and other relevant sectors.

Finally, we wish to underline the particular importance of international solidarity and cooperation. That is an enabling factor for us to progress more strongly in our collective fight against new HIV infections and deaths caused by AIDS. In that regard, Indonesia stands ready to support global efforts to reach the common targets of HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Nunes (Timor-Leste): I thank the President for convening this plenary meeting of the General

Assembly on the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the political declarations on HIV/AIDS. I also express my thanks for the Secretary-General's report (A/76/783).

The AIDS pandemic in Timor-Leste is currently at a low level. However, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS has been increasing exponentially. From July to September 2021, according to the National Commission for Combating HIV/AIDS in Timor-Leste, the country recorded 1,464 cases of HIV/AIDS. However, the number is even higher, as many people do not know that they have it. The number of annual AIDS-related deaths has increased slightly to 13 in 2021, from four in 2011. That data signal that HIV unequivocally still represents one of the major public health problems in Timor-Leste. Young people are the most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS due to the lack of knowledge of, and information on, HIV/AIDS.

To combat the spread of HIV in the country, the Ministry of Health of Timor-Leste opted for the following strategies in the National Health Strategic Plan 2011-2030: first, strengthening the National AIDS Commission to monitor and oversee the national HIV/AIDS programme; secondly, strengthening the monitoring, evaluation and capacity-building of human resources; thirdly, the prevention of HIV/STI infections through awareness, an enabling environment and promoting behaviour change communication; fourthly, establishing high-quality counselling, testing and diagnostic facilities for facilitation and monitoring of HIV incidence; and, fifthly, treatment and care for all HIV-affected and -infected individuals.

A key part of the national strategy is the establishment of the National AIDS Commission to provide independent advice to the Government of Timor-Leste on all matters related to HIV/AIDS, as well as to monitor and advise on the progress in the implementation of the national strategic programme.

To date, there are more than 11 voluntary and confidential counselling centres available through national and referral hospitals and private health clinics. HIV-related services that are available to both the general population and high-risk groups include HIV counselling and testing, community outreach, the treatment of opportunistic infections, including sexually transmitted infections, and socioeconomic support to people infected and affected by HIV.

In conclusion, Timor-Leste is committed to tackling inequalities to end the AIDS pandemic. HIV/AIDS is one of the global health challenges, and we need a collective effort to address it. Timor-Leste stands ready to cooperate with the international community to combat the AIDS pandemic. We must act together as one global nation in order to protect the lives of our global people and future generations.

Mr. Konstantinopolskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank the President for convening this meeting on combating HIV/AIDS, which is an important goal under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the area of health care. It is particularly relevant in the context of the continuing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, because people living with HIV are a priority group for vaccination. Russia supports the international dialogue on eliminating this serious threat to public health.

In the past few years my country's efforts have expanded in line with our national 2030 HIV/AIDS strategy. We have broadened the scope of testing, with as many as a quarter of the entire population now being tested every year. We have created a federal register of people with HIV, which helps us to plan our clinical monitoring and medication supplies. Eighty per cent of people on the register have received therapy. Vertical transmission of the infection has basically been eliminated, and we are conducting mass information campaigns regularly. In partnership with non-commercial organizations, we have succeeded in reducing the numbers of new HIV infections, and we will continue those efforts.

We are also contributing at the international level. Russia has provided approximately \$62 million to assist countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in this area since 2012, and the States that have received that aid have strengthened their HIV prevention tightened control over its incidence among migrant workers during that time, as well as improving their methodology and testing and developing a system for monitoring the infection's resistance to antiretroviral treatments. By 2020 those efforts had helped to ensure testing for 3 million people in the participating States. In two of them, vertical transmission from mother to child has been eliminated, and in two others the number of hospital-acquired infection cases has dropped considerably. Our information campaigns reach about 6 million people, and we have trained 4,800 specialists. In addition, in four countries Russia

has set up 13 mobile clinics, which have been used by 2.5 million patients, including while fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, and our partner countries have received laboratory equipment. Due to the demand for those services, we have decided to extend them, and we have allocated more than ₺1 billion for that purpose for the period from 2022 to 2024.

I would also like to note that refugees from Ukraine and the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics who arrive in Russia are being provided with health care, including anonymous testing for HIV antibodies. If they test positive, they receive the same assistance as Russian nationals and are provided with antiretroviral treatment according to clinical indications.

Turning to the Secretary-General's report (A/76/783), we support the 95-95-95 targets on testing, treatment and viral load suppression. We also support combating the resistant forms of HIV, developing a vaccine against infection, promoting prevention, developing epidemiological monitoring, promoting healthy lifestyles and providing socioeconomic assistance to women and young people. It is important to ensure access on an equal footing for all with regard to testing, treatment and health care generally, and to eliminate discrimination against people living with HIV.

However, we do not agree when the very complex issue of HIV/AIDS is used to impose a different agenda, which runs the risk of undermining the fight against drug use and for public health and protection of children and families. It is important to have a comprehensive approach that ensures respect for national priorities, development strategies and ways of life. We regret that the authors of the report once again preferred to close their eyes to this very real issue, to the detriment of global solidarity and our fight against the disease.

Mr. Galstyan (Armenia): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/76/783) and targeted recommendations on tackling inequalities in order to end the AIDS pandemic.

The Government of Armenia is committed to taking all necessary action to meet the commitments made in the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Ending Inequalities and Getting on Track to End AIDS by 2030, which the General Assembly adopted as resolution 75/284 in 2021. Since the epidemic first emerged in the 1980s, our national programme on HIV/AIDS prevention has constantly evolved, expanding the

scope and coverage of its programmes, ensuring that interventions are evidence-informed, based on human rights and responsive to the needs of key populations in need of HIV prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care and support services. In line with the World Health Organization recommendations, Armenia has continued its successful implementation of the Treat All policy, aimed at improving the quality of HIV treatment and bringing the country closer to universal health coverage.

In January 2022, we adopted a new national programme on HIV/AIDS prevention for the period from 2022 to 2026, with the goal of providing an effective response to HIV and paving the way for ending AIDS by 2030. The new national programme builds on previous programmes and aims to address the key priority challenges to delivering HIV prevention, testing and treatment services for key populations, as well as specific subgroups of the general population that are more vulnerable, such as labour migrants and young people. We are currently undertaking extensive measures to decentralize and integrate HIV services at the level of primary health-care facilities in order to maximize accessibility, minimize stigma and discrimination, expand the coverage of services, introduce or scale up innovative approaches such as pre-exposure prophylaxis, community-based HIV testing and self-testing, expand links to care and address new and emerging challenges.

In Armenia as elsewhere, the ability to secure continuing services for people living with, at risk of or affected by HIV was disrupted by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We have seen disruptions to services resulting from COVID-19 and to the response to it, with numbers of cases newly diagnosed declining in 2020, probably due to disruptions to HIV testing.

Since ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030 remains our goal, we now need to increase our investment in order to scale up efforts to reduce the rates of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths and step up localized, timely and more targeted interventions. In that connection, we stress the importance of the continued support of the international community, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and its co-sponsor organizations. These efforts will not only help to end AIDS but will also improve pandemic prevention and response preparedness and help safeguard the full realization

of the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

Ms. Ershadi (Iran): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report entitled “Tackling inequalities to end the AIDS pandemic” (A/76/783). As the report rightly points out, the efforts to end the AIDS pandemic by 2030 are still not on track. Based on that, Member States are urged to take immediate action to tackle the challenges that play a role in slowing progress. The world must face and address not only AIDS but also the compounding issues that have evolved as a result of the coronavirus disease pandemic. With both pandemics colliding, we continue to witness the world failing to address the underlying barriers to equitable access to health-care services as it remains dangerously underprepared. We therefore need to build on the remarkable progress we have made thus far on different fronts, while also redoubling our efforts to achieve the bold objectives to which all of us are committed.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is among the most committed countries in the Asia region and has made remarkable achievements in the control and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, Iran is one of the few countries in the region to provide secure access for the health needs of people living with HIV/AIDS, including high-risk populations affected by AIDS who receive specialized treatment and health-care services free of charge. Eradicating mother-to-child transmission of HIV is also one of my country’s top priorities, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS can play a vital role in this area.

As is reflected in recommendation 3 of the report of the Secretary-General, it should be ensured that the latest medicine and health-care technology for HIV prevention, testing and treatment, including a future HIV vaccine, are rapidly made available and affordable for developing countries. Bearing this in mind, all of the obstacles that stand in the way of this access should be removed. Unfortunately, unilateral coercive measures in the form of unilateral financial and banking sanctions imposed against Iran have seriously violated the right to health of Iranians, particularly among its populations living with HIV/AIDS. These unjust and harmful sanctions disrupt normal channels of international cooperation and continue to be a major source of concern adversely affecting Iran’s national endeavours in fighting all kinds of disease. Furthermore, these measures prevent

timely and effective access to diagnostic medicine, vaccine, medical equipment, technologies and supplies required for the comprehensive provision of health-care services, especially for those affected by or living with HIV/AIDS.

My delegation expresses its grave concern over such unilateral illegal policies and practices that hinder efforts to provide access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support services. We would like to call upon those responsible to immediately remove such obstacles, which limit the capacity of developing countries to provide affordable and effective HIV/AIDS prevention as well as treatment products, diagnostic medicine commodities and pharmaceutical products.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Thomas (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): Allow me also to thank our colleagues from the office of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) here in New York for supporting the preparation of this meeting as well as an excellent additional side event on Wednesday.

The adoption of last year’s Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS was an important step forward, yet the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has continued to set our fight against HIV/AIDS back. As indicated in the report that brings us to the General Assembly Hall today (A/76/783), the pandemic has slowed testing, treatment, prevention and harm-reduction services, and it has reduced access to pre-exposure prophylaxis, sexual and reproductive health services, not to mention badly needed investments in health systems.

While our interventions are improving — and we have seen significant progress over the years — people living with HIV/AIDS in many parts of the world continue to struggle to get free or affordable testing, antiretroviral therapy and prevention services, owing to structural inequalities, which are further exacerbated by COVID-19. We cannot deliver on the shared commitment to end HIV/AIDS by 2030 without ensuring that everyone everywhere can access HIV prevention, testing, life-saving treatment and care. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and its 192 national societies are committed to supporting people with or affected

by HIV/AIDS, including key populations, communities in the last mile and people on the move, with a range of services including treatment, care interventions, community engagement, cross-border cooperation and humanitarian service points along migratory routes. And, in partnership with UNAIDS via our Memorandum of Understanding, we are working to scale up access to testing and treatment for tens of millions of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Reflecting on the experience and work of national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies from so many countries present in this Hall, which have been working to support people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS for decades, allow me to share three recommendations for action that complement and build upon today's report so as to achieve our shared goal of ending HIV/AIDS.

First, communities and local organizations must be placed at the centre of HIV/AIDS strategies. Local organizations are not only best equipped to identify and respond to the specific challenges and opportunities of their communities, but also to reach people in the last mile. Further, we know from experience that expanding access to HIV/AIDS services requires the meaningful engagement of local organizations, community workers and volunteers, and people living with HIV/AIDS themselves in programme planning and implementation.

Secondly, HIV/AIDS cannot be ended as a public health threat without effectively reaching all communities, including people on the move and mobile populations. During the pandemic, the HIV/AIDS-related needs of these populations were frequently ignored or unaddressed, and increasing discrimination towards migrants further prevented them from gaining access to life-saving HIV/AIDS services. Programmes to support people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, including in humanitarian and fragile contexts, need to take into account the needs of migrants, refugees, crisis and other mobile populations in all their diversity.

Thirdly, and finally, HIV/AIDS services need to be bolstered by robust social-protection and public-health systems, which must be those that reduce vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, tackle stigma and discrimination, and account for the needs of populations at higher risk of HIV/AIDS. These include psychosocial support services, which should be culturally appropriate and promote treatment adherence, and tailored services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Mental health is often also left out of HIV/AIDS interventions,

but we would like to highlight this essential aspect as mental health disorders can be the cause of individuals adopting risky behaviours and are often linked to high HIV/AIDS vulnerability.

The IFRC and its national societies will continue to invest in community-led human rights-based gender-transformative responses and to prioritize and advocate equitable access to life-saving medicines and health technologies for everyone, raising the voices of marginalized communities and people in vulnerable situations and ensuring that no one is left behind.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Sovereign Order of Malta.

Mr. Espiritu (Sovereign Order of Malta): The Sovereign Order of Malta, which has for nearly a millennium been at the service of the sick and the poor of the world, lauds the commitment taken in the 2021 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS to focus on the inequalities that contribute to the persistent spread of HIV/AIDS and to the gaps and treatment delivery and prevention.

Exactly a year after the Political Declaration was adopted, we note with concern that HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths are not declining at a rate necessary to achieve the goal of eliminating HIV/AIDS by 2030. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/76/783), AIDS is still responsible for more than 13,000 deaths every week, and an estimated 1.5 million new HIV infections and 680,000 deaths from AIDS-related causes occurred over the past year. A total of 38 million people are living with HIV worldwide, and almost 3 million are under the age of 19. We also note with concern that each day approximately 850 children became infected with HIV, and approximately 330 children die from AIDS-related causes.

As the Secretary-General's report notes, an unacceptable number of children continue to slip through the cracks when it comes to testing and treatment. Two fifths of infants and children living with HIV go undiagnosed, and half of the children living with HIV in 2020 are not benefiting from any antiretroviral therapy.

Recognizing that reaching eliminating HIV/AIDS cannot be accomplished without addressing the inequalities which perpetuate that pandemic, the Order of Malta continues to commit itself to aggressively reaching out to the poorest, most isolated and most

marginalized, who are at the highest risk and suffer most from the virus.

On five continents, the Order has continued to combat the HIV pandemic with treatment, prevention and education programmes, mindful also of meeting the psychosocial needs of those living with HIV and their families through integrative and holistic approaches.

For example, in the Ilembe district of South Africa, our Relief Corps, in addition to providing free testing and counselling services, provides life-changing antiretroviral drugs for people living with HIV throughout the district, regularly taking medicines via its mobile clinic to patients living in poverty and isolation to ensure adherence and prevent treatment failure. Again in South Africa, mindful that HIV does not affect just those who have been infected, the Order runs a home in Mendani for children who have been made orphans by the spread of HIV.

In Kenya, the work of our relief agency, Malteser International, has since 2001 focused efforts on the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS among the disadvantaged living in the slums of Nairobi and among various tribal groups.

In Mexico City, where the percentage of HIV-positive mothers over the age of 15 has increased considerably, the Order continues its transmission-prevention programmes, managing courses for mothers and fathers, providing psychosocial counselling and distributing food supplements, enriched milk and hygiene kits for mothers and babies.

In the highly rural and impoverished Shan state in Myanmar, the Order has since 2003 maintained a project providing diagnosis and treatment for HIV/AIDS as well as health education and information campaigns aimed at the region's most severely affected groups, such as sex workers, uniformed personnel and young people, as well as the broader public.

Those are only a few of the examples of how the Order of Malta, with its medical facilities and Relief Corps in 120 countries, is striving to combat the HIV/AIDS crisis. As the Political Declaration and the Secretary-General's report note, the integration of HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention with other support services is essential to accelerating the end of the pandemic. Our experience confirms that holistic approach, as in all those examples the effectiveness of the Order's work against HIV/AIDS is closely linked

to its integration with our diagnostic and treatment-delivery services, particularly for tuberculosis, as well as other services such as psychosocial, educational and nutritional support.

The Order of Malta stresses the urgent need to tackle the inequalities that hamper access to HIV prevention, care and treatment services and which perpetuate the pandemic, particularly among children, the marginalized and the poor. With our 13,000 members, 100,000 volunteers and 80,000 relief and health professionals worldwide at the service of the suffering, the Order of Malta pledges its commitment to cooperating with Member States in eliminating HIV/AIDS by the close of this decade.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in this debate. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 11?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 115 (continued)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of members of the Economic and Social Council

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Eastern European States (1 seat)

Number of ballot papers:	185
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	185
Abstentions:	3
Number of members present and voting:	182
Required two-thirds majority:	122
Number of votes obtained:	
Russian Federation:	101
North Macedonia:	81

Since no candidate obtained the required two-thirds majority in the previous ballot, there remains one seat to be filled from among the Eastern European States. We shall therefore proceed to the second unrestricted ballot.

In accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure, the sixth round of balloting shall be unrestricted. May I remind the Assembly that any member State from among the Eastern European States may be a candidate

except those that will remain members of the Economic and Social Council as of 1 January 2023, as well as those that were already elected for a term beginning on 1 January 2023.

The following members can therefore not be voted for in the present balloting: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process. Ballot papers will now be distributed, and the voting has begun.

Members are requested to put an "X" in the boxes next to the name printed on the ballot paper or to write the name of another eligible State on the blank line. If the box next to the name of a State is checked, the name of that State does not have to be repeated on the blank line.

There should not be more than one checked box or handwritten name for the vacant seat to be filled. Accordingly, members can check only one box or write one name of an eligible State from among the Eastern European States in the space provided.

If a ballot paper contains a vote for a Member State that will remain a member of the Economic and Social Council as of 1 January 2023 or that was already elected for a term beginning on 1 January 2023, the ballot paper will be declared invalid.

Finally, if a ballot paper contains any notation other than a vote in favour of an eligible member State, those notations will be disregarded.

At the invitation of the Acting President, the representatives of Algeria, Ecuador, Hungary,

Monaco, Mozambique and Timor-Leste acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 5.25 p.m. and resumed at 5.40 p.m.

Agenda item 115 (continued)

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of members of the Economic and Social Council

The Acting President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Eastern European States (1 seat)

Number of ballot papers:	182
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	182
Abstentions:	2
Number of members present and voting:	180
Required two-thirds majority:	120
Number of votes obtained:	
Russian Federation:	99
North Macedonia:	81

The unrestricted ballot has again been inconclusive. One seat remains to be filled from among the Eastern European States. In accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure, we should continue with the series of balloting. Given the lateness of the hour, further balloting will take place on a date to be determined.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 115.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.