



General Assembly

Sixty-third session

68th plenary meeting

Thursday, 11 December 2008, 3.15 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann (Nicaragua)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 42 (continued)

Sport for peace and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/63/466)

Draft resolution (A/63/L.51)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/63/L.51, entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace".

Since the draft resolution was submitted, the following countries have become sponsors: Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Cape Verde, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Myanmar, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uruguay.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.51?

Draft resolution A/63/L.51 was adopted (resolution 63/135).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 42?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 65 (continued)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Draft resolution A/63/L.48

(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Draft resolutions A/63/L.47, A/63/L.49 and A/63/L.53

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolution A/63/L.45

(c) Assistance to the Palestinian people

Draft resolution A/63/L.50

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held the debate on this agenda item and its sub-items at its 43rd to 45th meetings, on 10 and 11 November. Members will also recall that the Assembly adopted a resolution under sub-item (b) at the 45th meeting.

I call on the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.47.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.



Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the tsunami-affected countries, draft resolution A/63/L.47, entitled “Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster”.

The Indian Ocean tsunami on 26 December 2004 is still considered one of the unprecedented natural disasters in recorded history. The casualties of this natural disaster reached historical and enormous proportions; the lives of more than 260,000 people were claimed.

Beyond the initial emergency relief, affected countries have the arduous task of reconstructing and rehabilitating the damaged areas. We attach great importance to the role of the international community and the United Nations in supporting affected countries in the emergency relief phase and in the process of transition from relief to development.

While continuing the post-tsunami disaster recovery, the affected countries have agreed that this draft resolution will be the last. In this regard, on behalf of the tsunami-affected countries, I wish to express our deepest gratitude for the General Assembly’s continued support and its endorsement of past draft resolutions.

The Indian Ocean tsunami was a hard reminder that disasters can happen at any time. Years of development could easily be wiped out in a matter of minutes. This tragic event called attention to the pressing need to reduce risk and improve the management of natural hazards. For this reason, the efforts being made are not simply to restore communities to their pre-tsunami vulnerability, but instead to place them in a better position to avert and respond effectively to tsunamis.

For the tsunami-affected countries, the priority is to rebuild and rehabilitate the damaged areas so that they are better than before. We therefore urge continued strengthening of partnerships and continued support for the medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of the affected countries.

Within the last four years, with the support of the international community, progress has become visible in the tsunami-affected countries. Their Governments are working hard to prevent the same devastation in a possible future tsunami. Disaster management

institutions have been developed or strengthened, so that they can enhance their rapid response to disaster. In the channelling and utilization of resources, measures to ensure accountability and financial transparency have also been taken. Despite the lingering trauma, towns and communities, individuals and families are slowly returning to their normal way of life.

In this final draft resolution on the Indian Ocean tsunami, the key actions emphasized are: first, enhancing prevention, risk reduction and humanitarian assistance measures through the sharing of lessons learned by the tsunami-affected countries and other relevant stakeholders with other disaster-affected and disaster-prone countries; secondly, improving legal and institutional frameworks of government and regional organizations for disaster management; thirdly, functionalizing tsunami early warning systems and focal points capable of receiving and disseminating tsunami advisories around the clock; fourthly, having the continued support of the international community, including the United Nations system, for the tsunami-affected countries as their efforts are mainstreamed into long-term development assistance projects and programmes.

On behalf of the tsunami-affected countries, I express our deepest and sincere appreciation to Member States that have shown interest in and supported this final draft resolution. We truly hope that it can be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Liberia to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.45.

Mrs. Osode (Liberia): On behalf of the sponsors, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.45, entitled “Humanitarian assistance and reconstruction of Liberia”. The draft is similar to resolution 61/218, adopted by consensus, and other consensus resolutions on the subject adopted by the General Assembly since 1990, updated to take into consideration new developments.

Draft resolutions on this subject have always signified an important act of solidarity by the Assembly with the people of Liberia in their determination to overcome conflict and dictatorship and in their hope to build a new democratic and prosperous society.

In the sixth preambular paragraph, after the words "Taking note," we have added the words "while conscious of further challenges,".

Moreover, the preambular part has three new paragraphs: the fifth, seventh and ninth. We considered it appropriate to include the fifth preambular paragraph, on national reconciliation, which is one of the focus areas for peacebuilding and a precondition for sustainable peace after conflict. In Liberia, legislation establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was passed in 2005. Its hearings, which included testimony from very high-level officials, started in January this year and will be concluded this month.

By the seventh preambular paragraph, the Assembly would strongly condemn all acts of gender-based violence, including sexual violence committed against civilians, in particular women and children, and would underline the need to implement the Government of Liberia/United Nations joint programme to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (2008-2012). The joint programme is a tool for intervening in the fundamental issues of victims' lives.

The ninth preambular paragraph reflects the reality of the situation in Liberia today, which is generally stable but fragile.

Turning to the operative part, there is a minor editorial change to paragraph 3: after "Renews" the words "its invitation" should also be italicized. Paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 are all new, as is subparagraph (b) of paragraph 9.

The legacy of rape and other forms of sexual violence that were so pervasive during the conflict years continues to be felt today, with rape remaining the most frequently committed serious crime in post-conflict Liberia. Against this backdrop, a nationwide campaign against rape has been established, and the Government of Liberia/United Nations joint programme to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence, signed in June this year, will be implemented over the four-year period 2008–2012 as indicated in paragraph 4.

During the past year, Liberia has made steady progress in meeting its reconstruction and reform objectives. In March, the Government's poverty reduction strategy was finalized, and it was strongly

endorsed at the Liberia Poverty Reduction Forum, held in Berlin in June, as indicated in new paragraph 5.

By new paragraph 6 the Assembly would strongly encourage

"the international community to translate the tremendous goodwill expressed at the ... Forum into tangible resources and support for the Government's national reconstruction agenda, including its poverty reduction strategy and actions for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals".

The task of national reconstruction is principally the responsibility of the people of Liberia, who possess the political will and potential to make possible this vision.

The Government and the people of Liberia are deeply grateful to the many organizations, agencies and partners within the United Nations system that have responded with manifest goodwill since 1990 to the need for humanitarian assistance for Liberia. It is hoped that in two years the Assembly will be able to consider moving more confidently from humanitarian assistance to concrete commitments to the development of Liberia.

In view of this, by paragraph 9 (b) the Assembly would request the Secretary-General

"to present to the General Assembly, at its sixty-fifth session, the final and comprehensive report on implementation of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction of Liberia under the item 'Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance', taking into account the peacebuilding activities in this country financed through the Peacebuilding Fund".

I would like to express my appreciation to all participants in the Informal Working Group on the Humanitarian Assistance and Reconstruction of Liberia. I would also like to thank the European Union for its contributions, which enriched the text, and the Russian Federation for its flexibility and amendments which improved the draft.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to thank Mr. John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief

Coordinator, for improving the coordination of the United Nations humanitarian and disaster relief assistance in areas around the globe.

In particular, I wish to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/63/295), dated 15 August 2008.

The draft resolution has many supporters, but I regret that owing to a colleague's sickness it was not possible to obtain the names of all of them. We have a number of sponsors which have given their names to the Secretariat, and I express my appreciation to them.

I submit draft resolution A/63/L.45 for adoption by consensus.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of France to introduce draft resolutions A/63/L.48 and A/63/L.50.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): It is my pleasure, on behalf of the European Union, to introduce draft resolutions A/63/L.48, entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel", and A/63/L.50, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people". Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Montenegro and Serbia align themselves with this statement.

While humanitarian workers and United Nations personnel provide vital assistance to populations in distress throughout the world, their own security keeps worsening. The rise in the number of deliberate attacks against them is very worrying and calls for a firm reaction on our part. Responding to that call is the purpose of draft resolution A/63/L.48. I am grateful to all delegations that took an active part in the negotiations on the draft for their cooperation, thanks to which we have a text representing substantial progress.

The draft resolution stresses three main imperatives. The first is full respect of their international obligations by all. All States must respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, and all parties involved in armed conflict must ensure the security and protection of humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel. Similarly, all States and parties must respect the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence of humanitarian action, and fully respect

their obligations relating to distinctive elements of the Geneva Conventions.

Under the draft resolution the Assembly would emphasize that the security of humanitarian personnel is a fundamental condition for their safe and unhindered access to populations in need, and require that the relevant actors ensure that their public statements do not compromise the security of humanitarian personnel. It would also urge States to end impunity for acts of violence against humanitarian and United Nations personnel.

The second imperative is more effective coordination between all actors. The Assembly would stress the need to strengthen coordination between the United Nations and host Governments to facilitate the deployment and use of essential safety and security equipment, and to plan emergency operations, exchange information and assess the risks. For their part, host States must as soon as possible facilitate the use of communications equipment by United Nations personnel by limiting and expeditiously lifting the restrictions placed on them.

The final imperative is strengthening of the normative framework for protecting United Nations personnel and associated personnel. By the draft resolution the Assembly would call on Member States to consider becoming parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, and recommend that the Secretary-General continue to seek the inclusion of key provisions of the Convention in host country agreements and other related agreements negotiated between the United Nations and the countries concerned.

The Assembly would also reaffirm the need to ensure appropriate protection for locally recruited personnel, who account for the majority of victims and cases of arbitrary detention and harassment, and call for the provision by the United Nations of an adequate level of security for that category of personnel.

We hope that draft resolution A/63/L.48 will contribute to improving the security of humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel. My delegation and the 80 co-sponsors also hope that it can be adopted by consensus.

I now turn to draft resolution A/63/L.50, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people". Turkey, Croatia

and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union reaffirms its commitment to providing assistance to the Palestinian people. The sustained support from international community donors, working in collaboration with the parties, is essential in order to improve Palestinian economic and social infrastructures and meet the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people.

The International Donors Conference for the Palestinian State, which was held in Paris on 17 December 2007, was an important milestone in the political process set in motion in Annapolis, as it gave the international community a unique opportunity to support the economic and financial development of a future viable Palestinian State, to which the international community has pledged to donate more than \$7.7 billion over three years. The aid mobilized at the Paris Conference is a sign of the confidence that the international community places in the reforms undertaken by the Palestinian Authority.

The European Union would like to underscore the important role played by the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, which met in London on 2 May, in addition to its meeting alongside the General Assembly on 22 September. The Committee should allow careful follow-up to the outcome of the Paris Conference to be carried out in order to ensure that the promises made in Paris translate into real financial assistance. The European Union also commends the Conference in Support of Palestinian Civil Security and the Rule of Law, which was held in Berlin on 24 June 2008.

For its part, the European Union has continually increased its assistance. The total amount of European Union aid to the Palestinian people, including humanitarian and non-humanitarian assistance, as well as contributions to the European Commission's specialized mechanism, will this year exceed 540 million euros, meaning that once again the European Union and its member States are the Palestinian Authority's biggest donor.

The European Union remains determined to lend its support to the ongoing negotiations between parties which began in Annapolis, and is ready to work closely with the Palestinian Authority, the Quartet and regional partners to contribute to the recovery of the Palestinian

economy as well as to the well-being, safety and security of all people in the region. To this end, last year, the European Union adopted an action strategy in order to adapt and strengthen its activities in areas such as security, law and order, strengthening of institutions, good governance, contributions to civil society and support for the economy. It has a Special Representative who is primarily responsible for coordinating these efforts on the ground, in partnership with the European Commission.

We would also like to highlight the decisive role played by the Quartet Special Representative, Mr. Tony Blair, commend the work which he has accomplished, and encourage him to continue his efforts.

The European Union, however, remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, in particular in the Gaza Strip, and urges that barriers be removed so that there is free access to goods and basic services, in particular of a humanitarian nature, but also to those which can help facilitate a genuine economic recovery.

The situation in the West Bank also gives cause for concern, as the numerous checkpoints and the route of the security fence are severely hindering efforts to maintain a viable economy, especially with regard to agriculture.

Finally, I would like to express our gratitude to the delegations that requested to be put on the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/63/L.50. The European Union and the other sponsors hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

We would also like to thank the Palestinian and Israeli delegations for their cooperation during these negotiations.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.49.

Mr. Örnéus (Sweden): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, a draft resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, contained in document A/63/L.49.

We would like to thank all delegations for the good and constructive spirit of cooperation and partnership in which the consultations were held. We are pleased that consensus for this important draft

resolution could once again be reached. This draft resolution has confirmed the established consensus on the humanitarian agenda, and strengthened our shared possibilities to face disasters of different kinds.

The draft resolution reaffirms the unique and leading role that the United Nations has to play in humanitarian emergencies. Since its origin, at the forty-sixth session in 1992, national and international emergency response capacity has been strengthened considerably. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the other mechanisms for inter-agency coordination have enhanced coordination in assistance, and the operational agencies of the United Nations have improved rapid and effective response in humanitarian relief.

At the same time, significant challenges remain. As the demands grow, the humanitarian system needs to further improve its capacity and have adequate and timely resources to respond. It is important to further enhance the respect for humanitarian principles and to better understand the role of humanitarian assistance in support of Governments and their populations. As in previous years, the draft resolution addresses issues related to efforts to strengthen international humanitarian response, as well as issues of principles for humanitarian protection and assistance.

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has been a true success. The independent review of the CERF, considered in this draft resolution, shows that the Fund has become a valuable tool in ensuring a more timely and predictable response to humanitarian emergencies. The draft resolution stresses the importance of addressing the findings and recommendations in the report in order to further improve the Fund to ensure that the resources are used in the most efficient, effective and transparent manner possible.

During the high-level conference on CERF last week, the Fund's already wide donor base was expanded to 100 donor countries, which together pledged a total of approximately \$380 million for humanitarian assistance through CERF in 2009. This year's draft resolution calls upon all Member States to consider increasing their contributions to CERF.

By the draft resolution the Assembly would express deep concern about the increasing challenges of the consequences of natural disasters, including the

impact of climate change, and encourage the international community to provide adequate resources for disaster risk reduction.

The Assembly would also express deep concern about the impact of the current global food crisis and its humanitarian challenges.

It would note with grave concern that gender-based violence, including sexual violence, continues to be deliberately directed against civilian populations in many emergency situations, and urge all Member States to address gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies.

The Assembly would condemn the increasing number of deliberate violent attacks against humanitarian personnel and facilities in many emergency situations, and highlight their negative implications for the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in need. In this context, we would decide to designate 19 August as World Humanitarian Day, in order to increase public awareness about humanitarian assistance worldwide as well as to honour all humanitarian and United Nations and associated personnel who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause and those who have lost their lives in the cause of duty.

I emphasize that by the draft the Assembly would once again reaffirm the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance. It would also call upon Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations to ensure safe and unhindered access to affected populations.

My delegation and the more than 70 other sponsors hope that the draft resolution will once again be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Antigua and Barbuda to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.53.

Ms. Akbar (Antigua and Barbuda): I have the honour to address the Assembly on behalf of the Group of 77 and China to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.53, entitled "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development". I am further honoured to inform the Assembly that Mexico and the Russian

Federation have joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

I should like to make an oral revision to paragraph 28, which will now read:

“Requests the Secretary-General to continue to improve the international response to natural disasters, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, and to include in his report, within existing resources, an analysis of the possible existing gaps in the assistance provided in the period between emergency relief and development, taking into account information provided by Member States and relevant United Nations entities, with a view to formulate recommendations on how to address any problems identified in a systematic manner and to ensure sustainable solutions, particularly in rehabilitation and reconstruction”.

Efforts to achieve economic growth and sustainable development and to realize the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, can be adversely affected by natural disasters. A single natural disaster can result in massive loss of life, livelihood and property, and set back development by several decades.

While there is no substitute for effective national efforts to minimize the impact of natural disasters, a national response alone can sometimes be inadequate. The draft resolution emphasizes that States must cooperate to find collective and cooperative solutions to the challenges that disasters present and to promote a more responsive, prompt, fair and needs-based humanitarian assistance system. The relevance of this cooperation has multiplied with the increase in the number and scale of natural disasters and their impact in recent years.

The United Nations system and the international community have a unique role to play in assisting developing countries to enhance their existing humanitarian capacities, knowledge and institutions, including by inter alia, promoting access to and transfer of new technology, funding and expertise to developing countries.

Such assistance will help developing countries to strengthen preparedness, including through the development and maintenance of early warning systems; to respond rapidly to natural disasters; to

mitigate their impact; to address the long-term challenges of the post-recovery period; to accelerate relief and rehabilitation; and to reduce the risks associated with future natural disasters.

We believe that the transition from relief to development is an important juncture to transform disasters into opportunities for sustainable development. In this regard, by the draft resolution the Assembly would request that the Secretary-General continue to improve the international response to natural disasters, with a view to identifying possible gaps in the assistance provided in the period between emergency relief and development, as well as outline recommendations that address any challenges.

In recognition of the practical concerns expressed, we agreed not to insist on a separate comprehensive study detailing that information, which will undoubtedly assist developing countries to determine best practices and where improvements need to be made. Instead, we agreed to the reasonable suggestion of having those issues incorporated into next year's report of the Secretary-General on this item.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/63/L.53 are convinced of the need for continuing international engagement in the post-disaster period, for restoring livelihoods, building resilience and reducing vulnerability. We believe that the draft resolution reflects this common understanding among all our partners in this regard.

The Group of 77 and China would like to express our deep appreciation to Mr. Anupam Ray of India for accepting the enormous challenge of coordinating negotiations on the draft resolution on behalf of the Group. We also thank all delegations that have lent their support and contributed to the outcome of the final text. As in years past, we look forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus.

The Acting President: I should like to consult the Assembly with a view to proceeding immediately to consider draft resolution A/63/L.53. In this connection, since the draft resolution was circulated only this morning, it will be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

“As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General

Assembly unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting.”

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to this proposal.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/63/L.45, A/63/L.47, A/63/L.48, A/63/L.49, A/63/L.50 and A/63/L.53.

Before giving the floor to those who wish to speak in explanation of vote or position before action is taken on the draft resolutions, I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Tarragô (Brazil): My delegation wishes to thank those delegations that contributed to the drafting of draft resolution A/63/L.49, entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”. I should also like to take this opportunity to highlight one of its main accomplishments.

Today, Member States are deciding to establish 19 August as World Humanitarian Day. The date 19 August 2003 marks the sad event when 22 people were killed in an unprecedented deliberate attack against the headquarters of a United Nations assistance mission in the field. Among those who lost their lives in the attack was the Secretary-General’s Special Representative, Sergio Vieira de Mello, a symbol of commitment and dedication to the humanitarian cause and the ideals represented by this Organization.

Brazil, together with Japan and Switzerland, proposed the establishment of World Humanitarian Day in order to pay tribute to all humanitarian workers and United Nations and associated personnel who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause, in particular those who lost their lives doing so. Observance of World Humanitarian Day should contribute to raising awareness of the importance of humanitarian activities worldwide and therefore have a positive impact on the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel.

We are encouraged to think that by commemorating the day we will pass on to future generations the importance of achieving and preserving

such high goals of the United Nations, to ensure that all can live in peace, security and dignity. We acknowledge the dedication of people who, in choosing to work for the United Nations, believe that it is possible to make a difference. We pledge to continue to work for the safety and security of those people, and for an Organization that is fully committed to fulfilling its lofty ideals.

Mr. Mercado (United States of America): First, we thank the delegation of India for its leadership in guiding the informal negotiations for draft resolution A/63/L.53, on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development, in a positive and constructive manner.

However, the United States is deeply disappointed by the introduction at this late date of revised language after delegations had reached agreement on the text, based on open and informal negotiations.

As one of the largest contributors to international disaster assistance, we appreciate the importance of the General Assembly’s humanitarian resolutions in addressing issues of urgency and relevance to communities around the world that have been negatively impacted by natural or manmade disasters. In this light, the United States believes in the need to agree to the humanitarian draft resolutions by consensus.

A healthy process requires openness and transparency, which have been lacking in the final moments of negotiations on this draft resolution. However, in the interests of reaching consensus, we will not oppose its adoption, although we shall not be able to sponsor it, as we had planned, due to shortcomings in the final phases of the process.

The United States hopes that next year the process will be more open, inclusive and transparent, leading to a successful consensual outcome.

Mr. Delacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union in explanation of its position on draft resolution A/63/L.53.

First, I strongly stress that the European Union attaches the greatest importance to humanitarian assistance in the event of natural disasters. It thanks India for conducting the negotiations on the draft, but

regrets the introduction of a last-minute amendment when the text was finalized. It recalls the major concessions that Member States made on certain subjects during the negotiations, and regrets that some delegations, having accepted consensus, went back on their position. The text, therefore, does not match that agreed during the consultations.

For that reason, the member States of the European Union will not sponsor the draft resolution.

In spite of those observations of principle, the European Union will join the consensus for the adoption of the draft resolution. It hopes to continue working constructively and transparently on such a draft resolution with all other delegations during the sixty-fourth session.

Ms. Grau (Switzerland): Switzerland would like to explain its position on draft resolution A/63/L.53.

Switzerland is disappointed with the way in which the latest changes have been introduced into the draft resolution. It is an important achievement that the General Assembly is able to adopt humanitarian draft resolutions by consensus, a consensus that is very dear to my delegation. But the consensus approach can work only if negotiations are undertaken in a transparent and inclusive manner, with a clear and shared understanding of procedures and deadlines.

Regrettably, that has not been the case with this draft resolution. The way in which the latest change to the draft has been made has not only put delegations that opposed the language throughout the negotiations in a difficult position, but also is not consistent with the spirit of rule 78 of the Rules of Procedure, and it leaves the Secretariat with almost no time to analyse whether the draft resolution triggers a statement of programme budget implications.

It is for the sake of consensus only that Switzerland does not oppose adoption of the draft resolution.

Ms. Sunderland (Canada): Canada strongly supports efforts to enhance the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, including by addressing the transition from the emergency relief period through reconstruction and rehabilitation stages to the development phase.

Canada participated constructively throughout negotiations on the text of draft resolution A/63/L.53.

However, we are disappointed that language that had been agreed in principle last week, after lengthy discussions and compromises by all sides, has been reopened at a late stage in the negotiations.

Limited flexibility has been shown to consider taking on board the concerns and drafting suggestions clearly expressed by Canada and other delegations. We remain concerned that the study proposed in paragraph 28 could place an undue burden on the Secretariat, especially unfortunate given that numerous similar studies are already available for Member States on the assistance provided in the period from relief to development.

Despite those concerns, Canada fully supports efforts led by the United Nations to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance, including in the period from relief to development, and therefore will join consensus on the draft resolution.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/63/L.45, A/63/L.47 to A/63/L.50, as well as A/63/L.53.

We turn first to draft resolution A/63/L.45, entitled "Humanitarian assistance and reconstruction of Liberia". Since the submission of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Brazil, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Egypt, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Lesotho, Lithuania, Morocco, Slovenia and Spain.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/63/L.45 was adopted (resolution 63/136).

The Acting President: Draft resolution A/63/L.47 is entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster".

Since the submission of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, Congo, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy,

Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zambia.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/63/L.47 was adopted (resolution 63/137).

The Acting President: Draft resolution A/63/L.48 is entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel". Since the submission of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Botswana, Colombia, Gabon, Georgia, Greece, Kenya, Saint Lucia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uruguay.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/63/L.48 was adopted (resolution 63/138).

The Acting President: Draft resolution A/63/L.49 is entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations". Since the submission of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Angola, Armenia, Cambodia, the Republic of Moldova, Mozambique, Pakistan, Thailand and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/63/L.49 was adopted (resolution 63/139).

The Acting President: Draft resolution A/63/L.50 is entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people". Since the submission of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Belarus, Iceland, Namibia and the United States of America.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/63/L.50 was adopted (resolution 63/140).

The Acting President: Draft resolution A/63/L.53, as orally revised, is entitled "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development". Since the submission of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Japan, Mexico and the Russian Federation.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/63/L.53, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 63/141).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position after the adoption of the draft resolutions, I remind delegations that such statements are limited to 10 minutes, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): I take the floor to explain Pakistan's position on draft resolution A/63/L.48, "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel".

The subject of the draft resolution is important to all of us, and we have therefore joined the consensus. The Government of Pakistan has been taking all necessary steps to ensure the safety, security and protection of humanitarian and United Nations personnel working across Pakistan, and remains determined to take all necessary preventive steps to ensure their safety, security and protection.

The Government of Pakistan allotted an adequately sized piece of land to the United Nations in Islamabad in the highly secure diplomatic enclave eight years ago. In our discussions with the concerned quarters we have been emphasizing the need for consolidation of different United Nations offices, currently scattered all over Islamabad, in one secure location. We have been given to understand that the United Nations inter-agency task force on common premises has yet to allocate resources for this purpose. It goes without saying that security considerations should not be made secondary to procedural and financial considerations.

The adoption of the draft resolution emphasizes the need for a proactive role both by Governments and the United Nations itself in ensuring the safety, security and protection of humanitarian and United Nations personnel. We would like to place on record that the Government of Pakistan is taking all possible measures in this regard, and expects the concerned agencies of the United Nations to expedite the matter.

Mr. Sim (Singapore): I am taking the floor to explain my delegation's position on the issue of accountability, as reflected in the seventeenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 19 of draft resolution A/63/L.48, entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel".

Singapore places great importance on ensuring the safety and security of all United Nations personnel in the field. We therefore take very seriously the report of the Independent Panel on Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel and Premises Worldwide. This independent body, also called the Brahimi panel, was established to investigate last December's attack on the United Nations premises in Algiers. Among others, Brahimi saw the need for a separate and independent audit and accountability procedure to review the responsibilities of key individuals and offices associated with the incident. That led to the establishment by the Secretary-General of a separate Independent Panel on Accountability, or what has come to be widely known as the Zacklin panel.

In October, Zacklin submitted a full report to the Secretary-General and released an executive summary to the public. Although not the full report, the executive summary was sufficient to cause grave concern to a number of delegations, including Singapore. Among other matters, it pointed to a dysfunctional security management system, a lack of supervision and training, and lapses in judgement and performance.

The mandates of Brahimi and Zacklin have a direct bearing on the draft resolution that the Assembly has just adopted. To underscore the importance which Member States attach to the two panels, and to ensure due process by the Secretary-General in following up on their findings, my delegation had proposed specific references to the two panels in the seventeenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 19. Our proposals were supported by many delegations.

We regret, however, that a few delegations objected to our proposals. Although those delegations eventually agreed to noting the Brahimi panel and its report, they refused to include any reference to the Zacklin panel. They argued that noting the Zacklin panel amounted to prejudging the panel's findings and those implicated, and would be tantamount to interfering with the ongoing investigations.

We disagree with the arguments. Our intention was never to pronounce on the specifics of the panels' reports per se, but merely to note the fact of their existence. That was precisely to ensure due diligence by the Secretary-General in taking up the panels' recommendations, including the conduct of follow-on investigations, as necessary, and the right of those implicated to the full legal process.

Given the gravity of the incident and the publicity surrounding the panels' establishment, we strongly felt that it would be remiss of the General Assembly not to mention the panels in its resolution. Worse, the omission might even cast aspersions on the panels and send the wrong signal to the Secretary-General that we fault the panels' findings. We certainly hope that that was not the intention of the delegations which objected to the reference to the Zacklin panel.

While my delegation eventually agreed to a generic reference to "accountability" in the seventeenth preambular paragraph and paragraph 19 instead of a specific reference to the Independent Panel on Accountability, we continue to associate all reference to "accountability" in the two paragraphs with the Zacklin panel. We expect the Secretary-General, as chief administrative officer of this Organization, to follow up, as necessary, on both the Brahimi and Zacklin panels' reports, and, for the sake of transparency and accountability, to update Member States, through the relevant Main Committee of the General Assembly, on the actions taken.

Ms. Halabi (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to explain its position on draft resolutions A/63/L.48 and A/63/L.49.

The General Assembly has just adopted draft resolution A/63/L.48, entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel". Our delegation joined the consensus on the important concepts agreed in the framework of strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance by the United

Nations, because we believe that ensuring the safety and security of all humanitarian assistance personnel guarantees the continuity and successful delivery of that noble assistance.

Our delegation would like in this respect to explain its understanding of operative paragraph 11, which states that “territories subject to their jurisdiction” means, among other things, occupied territories, so that the paragraph can be read by us as meaning that the General Assembly “Calls upon all States to comply fully with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including as provided by the Fourth Geneva Convention, in order to respect and protect all humanitarian assistance personnel in occupied territories”.

Draft resolution A/63/L.49 includes human goals that are extraordinary and appropriate measures allowing us to meet the very serious and surprising challenges that people throughout the world are encountering because of natural disasters and complex emergency situations that have a very serious humanitarian impact.

Despite the positive issues dealt with in the draft resolution, a vital question for people throughout the world affected by such difficult challenges is how to allow access for humanitarian assistance. There was not full agreement on the issue because of the rejection by some Western countries of the request by a large number of Arab States that people suffering foreign occupation be given access to humanitarian assistance. The objective behind the request was to address the humanitarian crisis caused by the inhuman Israeli blockade of the Palestinian people and Israel’s collective punishment policy against the unarmed Palestinian people.

Our delegation simply requested respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter, by asking the Organization to assume its responsibilities and put an end to Israel’s inhuman and immoral activities, which are a grave violation of the principles of international law. Prohibiting access for humanitarian assistance to the occupied Palestinian territories confirms our concern, which we have repeated on many occasions, about the double standards being applied by some delegations, which have repeatedly politicized all humanitarian issues and introduced considerations that have nothing to do with access to humanitarian assistance in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Mr. González (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to explain its position on draft resolution A/63/L.49, entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”, and share some thoughts.

First, we thank all delegations that worked for consensus on the draft resolution, especially Sweden, as the facilitator.

Costa Rica joined the consensus on this important draft resolution, which we trust will continue to be a useful tool for a timely and effective response by the United Nations system to any humanitarian emergency, whether of a complex character or resulting from natural disasters.

My country is convinced of the vital importance of cooperation and coordination for the provision of effective humanitarian assistance. We trust that the draft resolution will contribute to improving the joint work of the United Nations and all other actors involved.

We firmly believe that fundamental prerequisites for effective humanitarian assistance are secure, rapid and unhindered access for humanitarian personnel, as well as for supplies and the equipment needed to give humanitarian assistance to people in need. We are aware of the sensitivity and complexity of this issue, but our main concern is to save the victims of humanitarian emergencies and ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel. Therefore, political considerations must not be put before the lives and well-being of populations in need of humanitarian assistance, in any situation.

We recognize that humanitarian assistance cannot be unrestricted, and that it must be provided in conformity with international law and with full respect for humanitarian principles worldwide. However, those principles should facilitate the necessary operational space for humanitarian personnel to be able to act effectively and responsibly.

For those reasons, we regret that we were unable to sponsor this year’s draft resolution. We note with concern that for several years it has been virtually impossible to adapt the language concerning humanitarian access to the reality of millions of people around the world whose lives depend on rapid, secure and unimpeded access to humanitarian aid in

emergencies of all kinds, whether of a complex character or triggered by natural disasters.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position after the adoption of the draft resolutions. We shall now hear general statements after the adoption.

Mr. Suárez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the draft resolutions adopted under the theme "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance". Colombia co-sponsored several of the initiatives presented at this session, including draft resolutions A/63/L.48, A/63/L.49 and A/63/L.53.

The guiding principles established in resolution 46/182 define the fundamental framework of humanitarian assistance. I would like to highlight the fact that draft resolution A/63/L.49, on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance, included this year issues to which Colombia attaches special importance.

Recognizing positively the role of the United Nations in humanitarian assistance, Colombia reiterates the importance of ensuring and strengthening adequate, continuous coordination of this Organization with the authorities of the affected States and their humanitarian assistance policies. That is how to guarantee effectiveness, consistency and a better response, as well as a more efficient use of resources. This issue is recognized in the draft resolution.

Furthermore, Colombia appreciates the achievements of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) as a mechanism for financing humanitarian activities in which a rapid response is vital to save lives. The contribution of CERF in dealing with emergencies in our country is seen in resources assigned to agencies of the United Nations system that offer support complementing national programmes to prevent and respond to disasters. All provisions to strengthen the Fund have the full support of our delegation.

We also reaffirm that humanitarian assistance must be part of a sustainable process of reconstruction of the social fabric of the communities affected. Immediate assistance must be provided in a way that contributes effectively to both rehabilitation and the development of structures guaranteeing stability after emergencies are over.

Draft resolution A/63/L.49, on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, reiterates the importance of ensuring coordination and cooperation between the humanitarian actors, the donors and the affected States in order to make progress. This issue is also particularly stressed in draft resolution A/63/L.53, on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance, presented by the Group of 77 and China.

Draft resolution A/63/L.48, on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, includes relevant considerations and recommendations for making progress on this topic, which is why the Government of Colombia decided to co-sponsor it. The security and protection of humanitarian personnel are essential for the accomplishment of the vital mission of national and international institutions and organizations all over the world. In this regard, the Government of Colombia has continued to implement its policy of democratic security, which has made it possible to restore noteworthy security conditions throughout the country, reflected by a reduction in the crime rate and acts of violence by the terrorist organizations that still exist.

The Government of Colombia wishes to announce that last Saturday, 6 December, in the Department of Caquetá, the terrorist group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) attacked a medical mission managed by the municipal authorities of San Vicente del Caguán. The mission included 20 public servants from the Colombian Institute of Family Well-being and the local hospital. In this terrorist attack a big explosion caused the death of Yamid Correa, a psychologist at the institute, and a driver, John Jáder Lape. Other public servants — psychologist Diana Marcella Parra, nutritionist Laura Melissa Barrios and social worker Claudia Elena Gómez — were seriously injured.

This vile attack against a medical mission was a serious violation of international humanitarian law. Colombia has reported the facts to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Organization of American States (OAS). The Secretary-General of the OAS has condemned the attack.

Colombia will continue to be committed to promoting the application of the recommendations and parameters of action defined by the United Nations in order to strengthen the humanitarian response to

emergencies. Its Government has determinedly taken the main responsibility for initiating, organizing, coordinating and implementing the provision of humanitarian assistance in its territory, and commends the cooperation offered in this area by the international community, including donor countries and the United Nations and other international organizations.

We express our thanks to the delegations of India, Sweden and France for the important part they played in coordinating the consultations on the draft resolutions.

Mr. Sánchez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation expresses its support for and commitment to the draft resolutions adopted on strengthening the coordination of United Nations emergency humanitarian assistance, including special economic assistance, in cases of natural disaster. It is grateful for the interest of all delegations that participated actively in the negotiations. Mexico was a sponsor of some of the draft resolutions.

With regard to draft resolution A/63/L.49, on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, my delegation wishes to reiterate the importance of maintaining consensus. However, it is regrettable that one of the pillars of humanitarian assistance — access to victims — still suffers from a lack of understanding of its nature and importance. Mexico is concerned that restrictive interpretations, inconsistent with any humanitarian consideration, weaken the right of victims to receive humanitarian assistance.

In emergencies States are called upon to consider the limits of national capacities and to exercise the prerogative of asking for assistance and receiving it in the most appropriate way. There is no doubt about that. However, those who in such conditions see humanitarian assistance as something that overshadows sovereignty, without considering the needs of the affected population, shatter the pillars on which the assistance is supplied and put at risk the lives, dignity and health of that population.

Mexico will continue working to protect the victims of emergencies, whether those emergencies result from armed conflict, natural disasters or other complex causes.

Moreover, Mexico shares in the spirit of draft resolution A/63/L.53, on international cooperation on

humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development. It emphasizes that, while it is necessary to have sufficient, flexible and sustainable resources for the activities of recovery, preparation and risk reduction related to such disasters, it is also very important to make more significant commitments linked to prevention. Mexico will continue to work to that end.

The Acting President: I call on the observer for Palestine.

Mr. Hijazi (Palestine): My delegation wishes to make a brief general statement in connection with the adoption of draft resolution A/63/L.50, under sub-item (c).

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to the delegation of France, which currently holds the presidency of the European Union, for its efforts to reach a consensus on the draft resolution.

Through the adoption of draft resolution A/63/L.50, the international community reaffirms its commitment to the Palestinian people and the ultimate realization of their inalienable rights. Over the past six decades that assistance has been key for the resilience of the Palestinian people and for ensuring that they, the majority of whom are dispossessed refugees, are not forgotten or forsaken, despite the many years of conflict, turmoil and suffering. That assistance has time and again served as a reaffirmation of the right of the Palestinian people to live a life of dignity and to build their vital institutions to enable them to survive and withstand the imposed misery of military occupation, and to prepare for a tomorrow free from its shackles.

That assistance is a clear political message to stand by international legitimacy and principles of international law, a commitment for which the Palestinian people will always extend their gratitude and thanks to the international community.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of China, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Shao Changfeng (China): China attaches great importance to co-sponsorship. We believe that co-sponsoring draft resolutions is a strong commitment to reflect support and solidarity.

China had expressed willingness to co-sponsor draft resolutions A/63/L.45 and AS/63/L.47. I was in the General Assembly Affairs main office yesterday afternoon at about 3.30 p.m. to 4 p.m. trying to sign the co-sponsorship list. It was a great pity that today I did not find our co-sponsorship fully recognized.

China would like to seek ways to reaffirm our support for and commitment to those two draft resolutions and to see whether in any way we can track the mistake by the General Assembly Affairs main office staff and have our co-sponsorship reflected officially here.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): On behalf of our office, I would like to clarify that unfortunately there is no indication that draft resolution A/63/L.45 was co-sponsored by the delegation of China.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in general remarks after the decision on draft resolutions.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I take this opportunity to thank Ms. Sylvie Lucas, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg, for coordinating the consultations and negotiations on the draft resolutions adopted under agenda item 65.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (a) to (c) of agenda item 65 and of agenda item 65 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 107 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/63/L.25/Rev.1)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on this agenda item jointly with agenda items 44 and 112 at the 51st plenary meeting, on 17 November, and that it took action on draft resolution A/63/L.27, under this agenda item, at the same meeting.

Draft resolution A/63/L.25/Rev.1 is entitled "Legal empowerment of the poor and eradication of poverty". Since the submission of the draft resolution

the following countries have become sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Denmark, Hungary, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland and United States of America.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.25/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/63/L.25/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 63/142).

The Acting President: Before I give the floor to speakers who wish to make statements in explanation of position, I remind delegations that such statements are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Çobanoğlu (Turkey): I wish to make the following remarks about draft resolution A/63/L.27, entitled "Promoting development through the reduction and prevention of armed violence", adopted under the same agenda item on 17 November.

The inclusion of Turkey in the list of sponsors of that draft resolution was a result of a technical mistake, which the Secretariat subsequently kindly corrected, and we thank the Secretariat for its cooperation.

For the record, we reiterate that Turkey did not intend to sponsor the draft resolution. Indeed, Turkey is not a signatory to the Geneva Declaration, and our decision to go along with the consensus on that draft resolution cannot be construed in any way as endorsement of the Declaration.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 107.

Agenda item 114 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries

Draft resolution A/63/L.41

The Acting President: The Assembly held a debate on agenda item 114 and its sub-items (a) to (u) at its 36th and 37th meetings, on 3 November.

I give the floor to the representative of Portugal to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.41.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): On behalf of the States members of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) — Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Timor-Leste and Sao Tome and Principe — I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/63/L.41, entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries”.

This year, the draft resolution stresses the progress made in the cooperation between the CPLP, United Nations agencies and other bodies and programmes, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

Cooperation agreements signed with the various United Nations agencies and bodies have been central tools for the exchange of experience, implementation of programmes and development of partnerships aimed at promoting cultural diversity, combating desertification, rural poverty and water scarcity, fighting against child labour and promoting decent work. Reference should also be made to the steps taken in addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic in CPLP countries.

The CPLP has been deeply engaged with the United Nations towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and is a strong advocate of multilateralism and of a joint address of the global challenges.

Furthermore, both individually and as a Community, we are committed to the promotion of international peace and security and to the respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as set out in the CPLP's Declaration of Establishment and its Statutes. Our role on mediation, conflict prevention, promotion of good governance and recovery, as well as in the strengthening of State institutions, is well known in countries like Guinea-Bissau and Timor-Leste.

The draft resolution refers to the outcome of the seventh Conference of the Heads of State and

Government of the CPLP, held on 25 July 2008 in Lisbon, where a political commitment was reached regarding the importance of promoting the Portuguese language in the international community, namely, in the international and regional organizations and the United Nations system. We believe that such a promotion will foster the ability of the United Nations to respond to challenges related to peace and security, development and inter-cultural dialogue in regions where the United Nations has established operations.

Under the draft resolution the Assembly would encourage the CPLP's Executive Secretariat and the United Nations Secretariat to initiate discussions on the establishment of a formal cooperation agreement between the two Organizations. We look forward to jointly exploring and identifying areas for further partnerships between the United Nations and the CPLP. The Assembly would also request the Secretary-General to submit a report on the resolution's implementation to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

Finally, on behalf of the member countries of the CPLP, I would like to express our profound gratitude and appreciation to those countries that joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/63/L.41. Since the submission of the draft resolution the following countries have become sponsors: Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Croatia, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, France, Liberia, Romania, South Africa, Spain and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/63/L.41. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/63/L.41 was adopted (resolution 63/143).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 114?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Before adjourning the meeting, I appeal to those Member States intending to submit draft resolutions on the remaining sub-items to do so as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.