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President: Mr. Deiss (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 116

Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/65/390 and A/65/605)

Draft resolution (A/65/L.36)

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, who will introduce draft resolution A/65/L.36.

Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to address the General Assembly, on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), on the agenda item before us, which is of fundamental importance not only to the Caribbean and African regions, as initiators of this process, but also to the wider community.

Once again, we use the opportunity presented through this medium to contemplate the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade and to reflect on its legacy and manifestations. That tragic period in human history continues to have an impact on societies affected by chattel slavery. Social and economic inequality, hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice can be linked in some way to the trade in slaves and slavery. We are determined to transform our societies through the inculcation of new values in current and future generations in order to remove the remaining vestiges

of that pernicious trade. That is one of the fundamental objectives of our project.

In advancing this initiative, we have received the support of Member States from other regions. Consequently, we wish to place on record our appreciation to the member States of the African Group for their unwavering solidarity and support. In that regard, we welcome the statement to be delivered by the Permanent Representative of Mauritania on behalf of the African Group.

Against that background, I am pleased to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/65/L.36, entitled “Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade”, which is presented annually by CARICOM and the African Group. The text before delegations today reflects current developments and addresses what my delegation sees as two sides of the same coin — that is, the International Day of Remembrance, on the one hand and, on the other, the initiative to erect a permanent memorial at United Nations Headquarters to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

Aside from various technical updates, we have made efforts to streamline the text with the deletion of those elements that are no longer relevant. Our enterprise is, so far, the only tangible outcome of the Durban process and that is reflected in the third and fourth preambular paragraphs.

In paragraph 5, we encourage additional contributions from Member States and other interested

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parties that have not yet done so to the Trust Fund that was established to implement the decision to erect a monument here at United Nations Headquarters.

We have also taken into the consideration the views and comments that have emerged from the informal consultations, and we have added the words “in accordance with their national legislation” in paragraph 8. That was done to accommodate the constitutional arrangements in countries with a federal system of Government, where school curriculums are determined by local Government and not the federal Government. At the end of the same paragraph, we have added the words “to provide such information to the Secretary-General for inclusion in his report”. The entire paragraph now reads as follows:

“Reiterates its request contained in resolution 64/15 of 16 November 2009 for Member States to develop, in accordance with their national legislation, educational programmes, including through school curricula, designed to educate and inculcate in future generations an understanding of the lessons, history and consequences of slavery and the slave trade, and to provide such information to the Secretary-General for inclusion in his report.”

In paragraph 10, we would like to make a technical amendment that was inadvertently not included. That paragraph should read as follows:

“Invites the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to assist the committee in defining guidelines for the selection process and in identifying qualified candidates including from its pool of international specialists to serve on the international jury.”

The amendment makes it clear that the panel of judges to be appointed for the international design competition will not be restricted to persons or specialists linked to UNESCO, since we favour a broad, inclusive approach for the competition.

We have also added a new element to paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, which should read as follows:

“Requests the Secretary-General to organize a series of activities annually to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance, including a commemorative session of the General Assembly at United Nations Headquarters and, as

appropriate, activities through the network of United Nations information centres.”

During the General Assembly’s consideration of this agenda item we have repeatedly heard statements from many delegations affirming the importance of the issue. It is, therefore, our expectation that consideration will be given to the provision of adequate and sustainable levels of funding annually, so that, as Member States and as a community, we can continue to honour the memory of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. CARICOM therefore requests the support of all Member States to achieve that objective.

Importantly, we have deleted the words “within existing resources,” from paragraph 7, which became redundant with the inclusion of paragraph 6.

Furthermore, we would like to draw attention to the first report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, contained in document A/54/7, which speaks specifically about the use of the phrase “within existing resources” in a number of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed of the difficulties that such limitations impose on the implementation of mandated activities. The Committee has written extensively on that issue, and both the ACABQ and the Fifth Committee have encouraged delegations to refrain from using that language for similar reasons.

This initiative, as well as the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, now commemorated annually on 25 March, seeks to raise awareness and promote a deep understanding of the lasting consequences of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

CARICOM commends the work done by the Permanent Memorial Committee headed by the Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the United Nations in steering the project to a successful conclusion. The Committee works assiduously each year to ensure that the memory of the victims, as well as the consequences of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, are accorded the commemoration and global attention they deserve.

On behalf of the member States of CARICOM, I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/65/390, which provides an update on activities held earlier this year in observance of the anniversary of the abolition of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The report also contains information on the involvement of various United Nations information centres that have participated in the International Day of Remembrance by holding their own commemorative events. We note, however, that activities undertaken by Member States in accordance with the resolution have not been included in the reports. We hope that with stable and predictable funding for the initiative, appropriate arrangements can be put in place to address that issue.

CARICOM conveys its appreciation to the Secretariat, and in particular the Department of Public Information, for assisting with the organization and publicizing of the annual commemorative events. We reaffirm our commitment to collaborate with you, Sir, with the Secretary-General and the Secretariat in the realization of future events of a similar nature, reflecting the solemnity that should be accorded to such events, as we work towards educating the public and preserving the memory of that horrific occurrence in order to ensure that it is never repeated.

The establishment of a permanent memorial at United Nations Headquarters to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, as well as the hosting of the related annual functions, will not be possible without the requisite resources. CARICOM therefore wishes to sincerely thank all donors who have contributed to the furtherance of the objectives of this important project. CARICOM also wishes to express its appreciation to the United Nations Office for Partnerships for its efficient management of the Trust Fund.

In the interest of transparency and accountability, the attention of delegations is directed to the report of the United Nations Office for Partnerships on the status of the Trust Fund and particularly, on contributions received and their utilization (A/65/605). That is in keeping with the request in paragraph 14 of the previous and current draft resolutions, as mandated by Member States.

The construction of the permanent memorial will serve as a lasting reminder of the atrocities committed over a period of more than 400 years, which resulted in

the enforced movement and enslavement of an entire race of our fellow men, women and children. The eventual adoption of the draft resolution by consensus would be further acknowledgement of the commitment of the international community not only to commemorate the victims of this sordid period of history, but to put in place measures to prevent its repetition.

Mr. Ould Hadrami (Mauritania): The African Group associates itself with draft resolution A/65/L.36. It also attaches great importance to the realization of the goals of resolution 61/19 of 2006. Understandably, the African Group is an active player in the group of interested States overseeing the permanent memorial project and is working very closely with the Caribbean Community in that endeavour.

Slavery and the transatlantic slave trade are painful aspects of our history that we could not forget and that the world must also not forget. By not forgetting those regrettable historical facts we stand a better chance of not repeating them. Through the draft resolution and subsequent related resolutions, the General Assembly has clearly demonstrated its determination to continue to educate humanity on the causes, consequences and lessons of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, and to honour the memory of its millions of victims.

The African Group strongly supports the various initiatives of the United Nations for achieving those objectives, including the erection of a permanent memorial to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade at United Nations Headquarters in New York, an annual commemoration by the General Assembly and around the world of the ignominious events of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, and the establishment of a trust fund for the permanent memorial, to name a few.

The Trust Fund in particular deserves strong and urgent attention from all members. Action at the national level should complement the words and initiatives of the United Nations. While we continue to raise world public awareness of the commemorative events at the level of the United Nations, we should not forget the need for Member States to develop their own media and educational programmes, as they deem fit, to educate and inculcate in present and future generations a clear understanding of the facts and

consequences of hundreds of years of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

The African Group reiterates its commitment and determination to continue to collaborate with the Secretariat, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other civil society and non-governmental organizations in bringing to fruition the establishment of the permanent memorial. It will also participate in all initiatives aimed at honouring the memory of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

Mr. Barton (United States of America): The United States delegation is pleased to speak this year again on the follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. Our delegation is also pleased to co-sponsor this year's draft resolution, entitled "Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade". We look forward to its adoption by consensus.

We must never forget the terrible human tragedy of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade and the moral courage of those who worked to end it. We must also recognize that our efforts to abolish slavery are by no means finished. The commemoration and the draft resolution (A/65/L.36) draw much needed attention to the plight of men and women who even today are denied the right to freedom and the fruits of their labour.

The United States remains determined to combat racism and undo the legacy of slavery in our own country. The Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Lincoln on 1 January 1863, marked the formal beginning of the end of slavery in the United States. When the thirteenth amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified, in 1865, it further advanced the United States effort to end slavery. But the legacy of the terrible institution of slavery still casts a long shadow. We must continue our efforts to eliminate racial discrimination and fulfil our nation's founding promise for all of its citizens.

The descendants of African slaves have made tremendous and lasting contributions to our country in all fields and walks of life. The United States remains committed to educating our youth about the slave trade and to honouring both the victims and those who sought to end this horrible practice.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Slavery is one of the greatest human tragedies ever known. The consequences of the transatlantic slave trade, including oppression, violence and social and cultural harm, have continued throughout the centuries. Cuba was one of the first colonies to receive African slaves. Between 1503 and 1873 more than 1.5 million enslaved Africans were transported to our island from the coasts of Africa or from other locations throughout the Americas and the Caribbean. In Cuba, as in nearly the entire Latin American continent and the West Indies, traces of the slave trade remain as a result of the colonizing drive and greed of European traffickers, who used slave labour to build their colonial empires.

The Cuba of today cannot be understood without an understanding of the manner by which the transatlantic slave trade has forever marked our country's history. We Cubans deeply appreciate our African roots and proudly declare that the Cuban people have directly and naturally inherited the gallantry, courage and endurance of Africa, which has for centuries heroically faced challenges that persist even today. Our cultural wealth and character are in great part expressions of the cultural heritage of the African peoples who enriched us with their wisdom, traditions, languages, religious beliefs, music, temperament and rebellious spirit. The courage and daring of the Cuban slaves who rose up against exploitation has nourished the freedom-loving and independent spirit of the Cuban people.

Cuba has always been part of Africa, and Africa of Cuba. For nearly three decades, more than 381,000 Cuban combatants fought selflessly to defend the integrity and sovereignty of our African sister nations. Only the remains of our fallen comrades and the honour of having done their duty returned from Africa. Today, over 2,400 Cuban collaborators are providing services in 35 African nations to advance development in areas as diverse as public health, education, agriculture, sports and construction, among others.

The former colonial metropolises must honour their historic debt to those who suffered from slavery and the transatlantic slave trade for centuries. It is unacceptable for former colonial homelands to now wash their hands of their past and their responsibilities. Africa will remain marginalized and its colonial heritage endless if the current and profoundly unjust and unsustainable political and economic order continues, where a few consume almost everything

while the majority of the world's population is marginalized from the alleged benefits of neo-liberal globalization.

It is unacceptable that Africa continues to finance rich countries' opulence with its resources while at the same time those countries continue to promise new official development assistance, which for the most part they fail to provide, and to charge interest rates on that foreign debt in amounts much higher than the amounts they have promised as aid. The statements we make in the Hall are worth nothing if African countries are then forced to spend five times more than the value of their resources to pay shameful amounts of foreign debt rather than pay for health care and education programmes.

Cuba is a sponsor of and supports the draft resolution introduced annually before at General Assembly on this topic by the members of the Caribbean Community and African States. We recognize the importance of organizing annual activities and holding an annual meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance. Cuba also supports the initiative of erecting a permanent monument at United Nations Headquarters to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. That is the least that the Organization can do to commemorate the abolition of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

Mr. Quintaes (Brazil): In his first official visit to the African continent, in 2003, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva acknowledged our historic debt to our neighbours across the Atlantic. Over nearly three centuries, millions of African slaves were forcibly brought to Brazil's shores, where they invariably faced extremely harsh conditions. As the country with the single most important African diaspora in the world, Brazil takes pride in its African heritage. It is an essential part of our culture, of our existence and, as one Brazilian anthropologist noted, of our own civilization.

Despite the recognition of the fundamental role played by people of African descent in the formation of Brazilian society, many inequalities persist. The Government of Brazil is fully committed to redressing that situation through the promotion of socio-economic and racial inclusion. In the past few years, around 20 million Brazilians emerged from poverty and 30 million joined the middle class, to the benefit of

millions of people of African descent who, for the most part, belonged to the most vulnerable groups in our society.

We are also working to provide people of African descent full access to education and health, inter alia by adopting affirmative action policies in several universities around our country, including the diplomatic academy. From our perspective, only by granting students of African descent full access to college education can we expedite the necessary changes and address the inequalities that still exist.

In the past few years, we have also paid special attention to the so-called *quilombos*, which are communities of descendants of slaves who live in rural and isolated areas of Brazil's hinterland. In that regard, we have implemented a series of integrated public policies to ensure such communities' access to land and to social and economic development. In that connection, I should like to mention last week's launch of a pioneering project entitled Quilombos of the Americas, which aims at establishing a network of public policies for rural communities of descendants of slaves in Brazil, Colombia, Panama and Ecuador. Its purpose is to promote food security and to assure those communities of the full enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights.

Brazil is strongly committed to eliminating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We have redoubled our efforts to fully and effectively implement the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action. The commemoration next year of that instrument's tenth anniversary will be another welcome opportunity to review and assess the implementation of our international commitments with regard to the elimination of the scourge of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Brazil strongly supports the initiative for the erection, at a place of prominence at United Nations Headquarters, of a permanent memorial in remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. In that regard, we reiterate our deep appreciation for the leading role that the Caribbean Community and the African Group are playing to advance this important initiative. In that connection, we are pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/65/L.36, which was just introduced. We hope that, in once again adopting a draft resolution on this issue, the General Assembly will signal its

commitment to appropriately honouring the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

We also take note of the current status of contributions to the Trust Fund for the permanent memorial. In that regard, we call on all States Members in a position to do so to make or enhance their contribution, in order to accord the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade the recognition they deserve.

As what was one of the main ports of entry for millions of slaves, Brazil is very pleased to celebrate once more the abolition of the transatlantic trade and of slavery itself, which represents a milestone in the global fight for human dignity and human rights. May the spirit that animated nineteenth-century abolitionists inspire us in our present struggle against all forms of discrimination, as well as our permanent struggle for the full realization of all human rights for all people.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements made by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and by the representative of Mauritania on behalf of the member States of the African Group.

At the outset, let me express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretariat for the reports (A/65/390 and A/65/605) being considered under agenda item 116 at this meeting. We note that a number of countries, including Jamaica, have taken steps to implement the annual resolutions on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. In the case of Jamaica, this relates both to the inclusion of the history and lessons learned about the system of slavery in school curriculums as well as remembrance activities. We note, however, that this information is not shared at the international level. We hope this will be corrected soon, and look forward to exchanging ideas and information with other Member States on this very relevant historical issue in the near future.

As the General Assembly turns its attention to the issue of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, not only do we recall the horrific period of the forced uprooting of millions of men, women and children, their transportation like animals across the Atlantic and the suffering they endured under the system of slavery; we also remind ourselves of the moral imperatives arising from the end of that pernicious system and of the legacies of slavery that linger on today in many

countries. We remain convinced that it is our moral obligation as members of the international community to ensure that the world will never again endure another tragedy of such immense proportions, which today is commonly acknowledged to be a crime against humanity. As is stated in the theme for the permanent memorial initiative, we acknowledge the tragedy, considering the legacy, lest we forget.

Today, in addressing this issue in the General Assembly, we stand up for fairness, equity, inclusion and a common resolve to address the ills of the past, which still affect many States across the world; and we reaffirm our resolve for dignity, particularly for persons of African descent. It is in this context that my delegation seeks the support of others for the full implementation of all Assembly resolutions under this agenda item. In so doing, the annual International Day of Remembrance will be placed on an equal footing with other resolutions on similar issues, thereby securing stable and predictable funding.

I should like to take this opportunity, as Chair of the Permanent Memorial Committee, to provide a brief update on the activities of the Committee in 2010. We started the year by initiating and attempting to solidify our engagement with the Caribbean diaspora, both through the various consuls-general as well as through community organizations in the New York tri-state area. We hope to establish similar engagement with the wider African diaspora in 2011. Among other things, the Committee focused on its fund-raising drive throughout the year. With the assistance of its advisory board, the Committee is currently revising its fund-raising strategy. We have made progress with a dedicated website for the initiative, which we hope will be launched at the end of this year. Member States will be provided with information on the site in due course.

The Committee also concluded consultations on the project design and the criteria for artists and judges for the international design competition, as well as on a draft memorandum of understanding for engagement with UNESCO. We look forward to the early conclusion of discussions with that organization in this regard. We also anticipate broad participation by States Members when the international design competition is launched, hopefully early in 2011.

I am delighted to report that this year the following countries made contributions to the Trust Fund — and please forgive me if I have inadvertently

left any out, but we did check — Australia, China, Denmark, Finland, India, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Turkey. It will also be noted that the Governments of Jamaica and Grenada made modest pledges during the course of this year. I am particularly pleased to highlight the \$250,000 contribution made by the Government of India, which is the single largest voluntary contribution to the Trust Fund to date. We commend and thank the Government of India. In that regard, I would like to refer to document A/65/597, which reflects the current status of voluntary contributions.

With the Assembly's indulgence, I also wish to express my sincere appreciation for the kind generosity of the Governments of the countries that have made donations to the permanent memorial Trust Fund. We are thankful for the show of solidarity in acknowledging the legacy of this dark period of history. We envisage that other countries will follow in their footsteps to make contributions to the Trust Fund to enable us to reach the target of \$4.5 million for implementation.

Before concluding, I would like to thank the members of the Committee — Brazil, Ghana, the Netherlands, Portugal, Qatar, Senegal, Suriname, the United Kingdom and the African Union — and in particular the United Nations Office for Partnerships, for their invaluable support, technical advice and assistance towards the implementation of the permanent memorial initiative. The Committee also continues to welcome the input of the Chairs of CARICOM and the African Group of Ambassadors.

In conclusion, I would like to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to all those who constructively engaged in informal consultations on the draft resolution before the Assembly (A/65/L.36). I am confident that, as with similar ones in the past, the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, in particular given the strong support by Member States. We are indeed grateful for the broad sponsorship of Member States across all regions.

Finally, let me express particular appreciation to the Member States of Africa and the Caribbean Community, which continue to play a primary role in advancing the permanent memorial initiative.

Mrs. Kolontai (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The international community celebrates two important days this month, namely, the International Day for the

Abolition of Slavery on 2 December and Human Rights Day on 10 December. Proclaimed by the General Assembly, the Days are directly related to the agenda item we are debating today. Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms". Unfortunately, as rightly noted by the Secretary-General in his message on the occasion of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery,

"The abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in the nineteenth century did not eradicate the practice globally. Instead, it took on other forms, which persist to this day: serfdom, debt bondage and forced and bonded labor; trafficking in women and children, domestic slavery and forced prostitution, including of children; sexual slavery, forced marriage and the sale of wives; child labour and child servitude, among others."

After the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, the dreadful words "slave" and "slave trade" gradually over the years turned into abstract concepts, but the problem of slave trading persists. We fully share the view of the Secretary-General that the existing reality obliges the international community to remain vigilant and to strengthen its efforts to eradicate contemporary manifestations of slavery.

Belarus welcomes measures by the international community to organize events to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. We believe that such measures could also include the General Assembly's 30 July adoption by consensus at its sixty-fourth session of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (see resolution 64/293). The full and effective fulfilment of the Plan would allow us to make a significant contribution to eradicating this form of modern-day slavery.

In line with a decision by our country's President, Belarus, together with a number of other members of the Group of Friends against Human Trafficking, has made a voluntary contribution of \$20,000 to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which we believe can help to provide significant assistance to the victims of modern slavery.

Belarus supports the efforts of the international community to keep the question of slavery and the

transatlantic slave trade on the United Nations agenda. Belarus shares the approach of the members States of the Caribbean Community and the African Union with regard to implementing an initiative to erect a permanent memorial to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade at United Nations Headquarters. In that regard, we are a sponsor of the draft resolution entitled “Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade” (A/65/L.36). We should not forget that historic phenomenon, which is forever imprinted in the world’s geography, economy and cultures and should be included in the schoolbooks and curriculums of every country in the world.

We believe that the educational programme on the transatlantic slave trade and slavery established by the Secretary-General, in cooperation with UNESCO, should continue to be expanded. That will help to create better understanding among members of new generations of the historic aspects of this tragedy as well as the threats posed by racism and racial discrimination and prejudice.

On the occasion of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, between 2 and 8 December this year we in Belarus carried out an outreach and educational campaign for young people under the theme “Let’s stop human trafficking”. With the assistance of the Belarus Ministry of Education and regional authorities, the campaign took place as part of a project by the European Union, the United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF called “Preventing, Fighting and Addressing the Social Consequences of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Belarus”. Along with interactive discussions on the problem of human trafficking, the programme of events included the screening of a documentary called “Inhuman Traffic”, which tells the tragic story of girls who fall into sexual slavery in European countries.

Let us all ask ourselves the question: “When are people sold?” The answer is simple: when they are not considered to be people. We must not allow that anyone today should continue to build their material welfare and get rich by humiliating the human dignity of others. We need to pull together to build a world where every person can determine his or her destiny in dignity, free of bondage, fear, humiliation or slavery.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): It is not only just an honour but actually an obligation to speak today following the introduction of this draft resolution (A/65/L.36) on the transatlantic slave trade. Australia is again this year a sponsor of the draft resolution. I say that it is an obligation because all of us are obliged to remember the dark side of our own human history. If we are to make progress in human relations, we must learn from the worst parts of our history.

Perhaps as many 18 million people were brutally enslaved and removed from their families and communities through the transatlantic slave trade, the largest forced removal of people in history. This is not remote history. However, it is history that is still very poorly understood. The last survivors of the slave voyages died only 50 years ago. Slavery has been abolished globally, but its legacy remains strong. Racism always threatens, and human trafficking persists today.

Memory shapes our future, just as the absence of true memory deprives us that future. History, of course, is often written by the dominant. Historians themselves have spoken of what the best of them have described as the disgraceful amnesia in our history about the slave trade. We must correct that.

Australia supports the initiatives under the draft resolution. We welcome the designation of an annual international day of remembrance and the associated commemorations. We also very strongly insist that we need to educate future generations on the consequences of racism and prejudice. We try to do so in our own school curriculums.

In Australia’s own experience, we know as a nation, and we recognize, that we have wronged some peoples in our own community, namely, the first Australians — the indigenous Australians. We have tried to come to terms with this, and are still trying to do so, through a historic apology to Australia’s indigenous peoples that was delivered to our Parliament, which endorsed it in 2008. That was deliberately symbolic for our nation, but it was also deeply personal, and not only for the indigenous Australians themselves but in many ways, even more important, for other Australians, many of whom were genuinely surprised by the depth of the emotional release they felt through the public acknowledgement that our own history had caused such wrongs.

Australia supports the creation of a permanent memorial in remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. We are today doubling our financial contribution to that project and encourage others to do the same. We will continue to support the memorial in the future and we look forward to the Assembly's adoption of the draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Benashur (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Libya would like to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his valuable report (A/65/390) on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 64/15 and the ongoing work to promote the programme of educational outreach on the transatlantic slave trade and slavery. Our appreciation also goes to the Director of the Department of Public Information for the valuable efforts made by the Department to continue the effective implementation of the programme. My delegation also commends the fruitful cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and the Caribbean Community of States for the organization of the third annual observance of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. We also applaud their work to establish a permanent memorial as a reminder of the slave trade and its tragedy.

There is no doubt as to the importance of the cultural component as both a means to express the suffering of enslaved people and support them in shaking off the shackles of slavery and oppression. We also have no doubt about the importance of the positive moral reflection that has resulted from the whole host of cultural and awareness-raising activities and initiatives organized to remind people of the victims of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery, which is in the interest of present and future generations.

At the same time, we believe that the promotion of the programme of educational outreach alone is not sufficient to deal with tragic events of the magnitude, depth and historical import we are debating today. The legacy of slavery has been a racist culture whose various manifestations, of similar aspects and dimensions, we can still see manifested in numerous parts of the world. One example of this is the daily suffering of the Palestinian people at the hands of authorities of the Israeli occupation. In that regard, we believe that the scope and long-term implications of the transatlantic slave trade still cast a dark shadow over the modern world. This subject should remain the

focus of scholars and decision makers at the international level so that lessons can be learned and applied in our contemporary lives.

We all know that the heinous crimes to which Africans were subjected over the course of more than four centuries through the transatlantic slave trade have left a deep wound on humankind. This historic tragedy claimed the lives of more than 30 million Africans, who were uprooted from their homeland and cast into a brutal world of apartheid and the worst forms racial discrimination. The transatlantic slave claimed the lives of millions of innocent victims. Those who survived it lived in oppression and injustice, chafing under the humiliation of slavery and racism. That dark era of history also left political, cultural, economic, psychological and social legacies that continue to create suffering for numerous societies in Africa and various parts of the world.

A collective reflection on the historical injustice inflicted on African peoples during past centuries as a result of the transatlantic slave trade and racist colonialism is indispensable to establishing an international environment conducive to the final eradication of such injustice. This can only be achieved by fully recognizing the historical injustice to which the African continent and its people were victims and by ensuring Africa's legitimate right to just compensation for the damage and moral and material losses inflicted upon it.

In conclusion, we believe that we, as a civilized community of nations, should seek to pool our efforts and promote cooperation to eliminate all contemporary forms and practices of racism and apartheid from which some people are still suffering. Foremost among them are the Palestinian people, who have suffered from an extension of the hateful and racist legacy of the transatlantic slave trade, as reflected in the theories and practices of racist superiority that, in addition to other such racist movements and systems, also gave rise to nazism, fascism, and apartheid in South Africa.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports under the agenda item "Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade" (A/65/390 and A/65/605).

The transatlantic slave trade is one of the most shameful chapters in human history. The wrenching of people and their transportation away from their own

people and homes across an ocean to distant lands make every other atrocity committed in the history of humankind pale into insignificance.

The work of the United Nations can never be complete until we emphatically and without any reservation condemn the transatlantic slave trade. We firmly believe that there should be a genuine admission, along with sincere repentance, that those horrific crimes took place. It is also imperative that the international community take upon itself the commitment never to let such crimes take place again. Additionally, at the level of United Nations, we must take every initiative to ensure that future generations do not forget the grief and tragedy borne by the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

The construction of a permanent memorial will be a fitting tribute at the United Nations to the millions of victims of the transatlantic slave trade. We are humbled and honoured to be part of the initiative to erect a permanent memorial. With our contribution of \$260,000, India is proud to be the lead contributor to the Trust Fund receiving contributions for the permanent memorial at the United Nations to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. India's contribution is reflective of our firm belief that the international community must pay homage to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

However, to date the Trust Fund has only received a mere \$800,000. That falls significantly short of the anticipated expenditure of \$4.5 million needed for the construction of the memorial. It is therefore obvious that there is an imperative for the international community to actually come forward and contribute to that noble cause. We therefore strongly urge all countries, especially those that benefited from the transatlantic slave trade, to come forward and contribute generously to show their earnest admission that wrongs were committed and that there is a sense of repentance.

The international community cannot let the idea of the memorial just remain a design on the design board. We also hope that the Committee that has been established to oversee the construction of the permanent memorial will finalize its memorandum of understanding with UNESCO at the earliest date, so that the international design competition for the memorial can be launched as soon as possible.

I would like to place on record India's support for the various activities and programmes undertaken by the Department of Public Information to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade every year on 25 March. We would also like to support the call for adequate, regular and predictable financial allocation of resources to the Department of Public Information needed to organize those events in New York, as well as in various countries, through the network of the United Nations information centres.

Education has a critical role to play in creating awareness among present and future generations about the history, causes and impact of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Its importance cannot be overemphasized.

We are happy that the Caribbean Community has today introduced the draft resolution entitled "Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade" (A/65/L.36). We have co-sponsored that resolution since 2007, and I am happy that we are co-sponsoring the draft resolution again today.

Let me conclude by quoting George Mason, one of the founding fathers of the United States, who said: "The augmentation of slaves weakens the states; and such a trade is diabolical in itself and disgraceful to mankind". We have a chance to pay tribute to the victims who suffered that disgrace by openheartedly contributing to the Trust Fund. That is the least that we can do.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

Before proceeding, I wish to inform members that action on draft resolution A/65/L.36 will be taken at a later date to be announced. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of item 116.

Agenda item 124

Global health and foreign policy

Note by the Secretary-General (A/65/399)

Draft resolution (A/65/L.27)

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.27.

Mrs. Dunlop (Brazil): On behalf of the seven founding members of the Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative, namely, Norway, South Africa, Thailand, France, Senegal, Indonesia and Brazil, and as the current coordinator of the group, Brazil has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.27, entitled "Global health and foreign policy", under agenda item 124.

I should like to announce that, in addition to the countries listed in document A/64/L.27, the following countries have also become sponsors: Angola, Austria, the Bahamas, Croatia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Ireland, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mongolia, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine.

At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation for the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on global health and foreign policy (see A/65/399) prepared in response to resolution 64/108, adopted on 10 December 2009. The report presents examples of global health and foreign policy coherence and coordination, along with institutional linkages at the global, national and regional levels, as well as programmatic approaches. It acknowledges the heightened importance of global health issues for foreign policy and their growing presence on the international agenda. The HIV/AIDS pandemic, the outbreak of influenza A (H1N1), social determinants of health, non-communicable diseases, and health issues resulting from conflict and natural disasters, among others, have consequences beyond borders and have turned global health into a major political issue.

As a result, multiple international initiatives have been launched to address global health concerns, including the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; the International Health Regulations; the Global Strategy on public health, innovation and intellectual property; the Code of Practice on the international recruitment of health personnel and the Human Rights Council resolutions on human rights and access to medicine and on HIV/AIDS and human rights.

Owing to their seriousness, prevalence and worldwide impact, global health issues have also been discussed in the General Assembly, the Economic and

Social Council, the Human Rights Council and the World Trade Organization.

The Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative was created with the purpose of applying a health lens to foreign policy processes and actions, and looking at new ways in which foreign policy could add value to and support global health outcomes. Our common vulnerabilities and the realization of the interface between foreign policy and global health, as well as of the mutual supportiveness between health issues and traditional foreign policy areas, such as human rights, humanitarian assistance, development and peace and security, suggest that there is a need to further explore and understand those linkages with a view to promoting global health and social and economic development, reducing inequities and making globalization work for all.

This year, draft resolution A/65/L.27 pays tribute to the multiple initiatives in the international arena related to health and welcomes the various conferences that will be held in 2011, such as the World Conference on Social Determinants of Health, the next Global Conference on Healthy Lifestyles and Non-Communicable Diseases and as the comprehensive HIV/AIDS review.

In its operative section, the draft resolution is divided into three main chapters: the health-related MDGs, governance for global health and follow-up actions.

The chapter on the health-related MDGs seizes the momentum of the United Nations High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs and underlines the importance of issues such as the eradication of poverty, the universal right to education, the empowerment of women, global partnerships for development, the role of national policies and the need to strengthen health systems. We must now translate political commitments into concrete actions.

The second chapter, on governance for global health, acknowledges the need to make the global health architecture more effective, efficient and responsive. It also reaffirms the central role of the United Nations system, recognizes the leading role of the World Health Organization, and stresses the continued need for partnerships, coordination and coherence at the national and international levels.

Finally, in the chapter on follow-up actions, Member States are encouraged to consider health issues in their formulation of foreign policy and development cooperation. The training of diplomats and health officials with the support of the United Nations system and academic institutions and networks would serve that purpose. We also encourage the generation of data on health workers' migration, distribution and coverage within the framework of the Code of Practice on the international recruitment of health personnel.

The General Assembly also requests the Secretary-General to submit a new report at the next session of the General Assembly on governance for global health, with special recommendations on the issue of social determinants of health.

This year's draft resolution, entitled "Global Health and Foreign Policy", is the third on the subject since 2008. It has the merit of consolidating international initiatives that impact health and of duly requesting the continued support of the United Nations system. We would like to thank all the delegations that sponsored the draft resolution, as well as those that participated in the consultations. We hope that they can all extend their support to the draft resolution.

Mr. Charlier (Belgium): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Iceland; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; as well as Ukraine and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

At last year's debate on the topic (see A/64/PV.62), the European Union highlighted that a discussion on health and foreign policy cuts across two core areas that form the foundation of the entire United Nations system, namely, the fight against poverty and the pursuit of peace and human security. A wide range of connections between health and foreign policy were identified in the report circulated by the Secretary-General last year (A/64/365), and picked up in resolution 64/108. They included the international combination of efforts to combat emerging infectious diseases and global pandemics, as well as efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular the three health-related MDGs.

We welcome the latest report circulated by the Secretary-General (see A/65/399), which was prepared by the World Health Organization, with its focus on strengthening global health and foreign policy coordination and coherence. We should continue to enhance our collective understanding of how health outcomes are affected by different aspects of foreign policy, such as international efforts to tackle climate change, regional responses to food insecurity and international action to mitigate the impact of economic crises.

The cross-cutting aspects of health for the achievement of the MDGs should be well understood. For example, it is difficult to ensure environmental sustainability without also addressing malnutrition created by the lack of access to affordable and safe food. In other words, all MDGs are relevant to improving the health status of our populations.

The recent High-level Meeting on the MDGs demonstrated the continued strong political leadership and commitment to achieving the MDGs and set out a concrete agenda for action. We believe that such strong political leadership will remain crucial, if we are to achieve improved health outcomes, especially improvements in women's health and the elimination of gender inequality.

The European Union also believes that broader partnerships, such as those with civil society and the private sector, are important for achieving the MDGs. While clearly recognizing that each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development, such partnerships with broader stakeholders can help address the multifaceted determinants of global health, and accelerate progress on the health-related Millennium Development Goals.

Let me also briefly highlight here that the European Union believes that discussions on global health and foreign policy in New York must continue to build on and effectively meld with the substance and technical expertise handled in Geneva.

The European Union looks forward to continuing to participate actively in discussions on global health and foreign policy — building on the success of the MDG Summit earlier this year.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group

of Asian States on agenda item 124, entitled “Global health and foreign policy”.

Let me begin by thanking the delegation of Thailand for preparing this statement on behalf of the Asian Group and also the delegation of Pakistan for coordinating the work as the Chair of the open-ended working group on enhancing the role of the Asian Group in United Nations affairs.

I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts in preparing the report in document A/65/399 under the agenda item. The report contains a rich and very timely discussion on the increasing prominence and relevance of global health issues in the international and foreign policy agendas. Furthermore, it highlights and follows important developments on the synergies between those two policy arenas. It suggests that mutual benefits and strengthened global health responses can result when we explore ways to enhance policy coordination and coherence between global health and foreign policy.

The Asian Group fully acknowledges that global health has always been and continues to be a pressing concern on the international agenda. In September of this year, the General Assembly convened the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, which was attended by an impressive number of high-level dignitaries from around the world. Throughout the course of that MDG summit, the international community was reminded of the important place occupied by health issues and the three health-related MDGs within the overall discussions on socio-economic issues.

Furthermore, the MDG summit, and in particular its outcome document (resolution 65/1), also reaffirmed the interdependent nature of all the Millennium Development Goals, while underscoring that the best way to successfully accelerate achievement in any one MDG is by taking a holistic and comprehensive approach to all MDGs. Making progress on the health-related MDGs would therefore entail a multisectoral approach that places equal emphasis on the attainment of all the other goals, ranging from poverty and hunger eradication, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women to promoting global partnership and achieving

environmental sustainability, including necessary measures in the areas of safe water and sanitation. In that regard, the Asian Group supports the initiative entitled “Sustainable sanitation: the five-year drive to 2015”, which was proposed by the Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation as a follow up of the International Year of Sanitation, 2008.

As far as the health-related MDGs are concerned, a holistic and comprehensive approach is most suitable, and the Asian Group remains seriously concerned about the lack of progress, particularly in ameliorating maternal, newborn and child health. In that respect, the Group welcomes the introduction of the Secretary-General’s Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health and urges that the Strategy be implemented by a broad range of partners in a well harmonized and integrated manner.

The MDG summit served as a strong reminder for the international community that the promotion of global health cannot be achieved in isolation. Despite the earnest efforts of all countries to promote and protect the right of every person to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, substantial gaps persist. It has become all too clear that we must reinvigorate our efforts to strengthen our national health systems, so that we may be better able to deliver equitable health outcomes. In that regard, we must continue to build sustainable health systems and strengthen national capacities to deliver comprehensive, accessible, affordable and quality health care. We must provide and strengthen comprehensive and affordable community-based primary health-care services, so as to ensure a continuum that includes health promotion and disease prevention.

Hence, the role of foreign policy and international cooperation cannot be overemphasized, in particular the role of aid targeted towards the health sector, commitments tied to official development assistance, North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation in support of national plans and strategies and innovative sources of financing. Furthermore, global health must be a priority consideration when dealing with trade issues. We must continue to promote universal access to medicines, fairer access to vaccines — particularly in circumstances of pandemics — and increasing global vaccine-production capacity.

The Asian Group also welcomes all health-related initiatives at the national, regional and global levels supporting the global health agenda. In that regard, the Asian Group looks forward to the Second Global Forum on Human Resources for Health, sponsored by the World Health Organization, the Prince Mahidol Award Conference and others, in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2011.

The Asian Group is of the view that in-depth discussions are best left to competent health professionals. However, positive and perhaps even catalytic political support for promoting such discussions can and often must come from the General Assembly. In the past, numerous high-level meetings on important global health concerns were convened at the General Assembly. Such forums have duly highlighted the fact that global health concerns are not addressed merely by medical responses, but require sustained political will and effective international cooperation and partnership. In that regard, the Asian Group supports the General Assembly's continued engagement in global health concerns and looks forward to participating actively in the high-level meetings currently being planned on non-communicable diseases, as well as the United Nations Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Review in 2011.

I wish to underline that a firm and collective commitment to global health is crucial for surmounting the multiple financial, economic and other crises and challenges that we face today and may face tomorrow. Considering that two of our members are part of the core group of seven Oslo Group countries co-sponsoring draft resolution A/65/L.27, which is being submitted under this agenda item today, I can assure the Assembly that the Asian Group stands ready to work closely with its partners in promoting global health around the world and looks forward to seeing the draft resolution adopted without a vote.

In closing, allow me to say a few words in my national capacity on the progress made by India in the field of health. In 2005, we launched our flagship National Rural Health Mission, which continues to be perhaps one of the biggest interventions of its kind in the health sector in the world. The programme has helped us strengthen the public health infrastructure with the appointment of over 100,000 health-care providers and over 700,000 trained community workers.

India is at present spending over \$3.5 billion each year on health services, with substantial expenditure on services aimed towards women's and children's health. Currently, India is focusing on strengthening its efforts in the 235 districts that account for nearly 70 per cent of all infant and maternal deaths. We have also undertaken significant South-South cooperation in the field of public health. With our unique position as a source of cost-effective generic medicines, we are currently assisting many developing countries by ensuring easy and ready availability of affordable and quality vaccines and medicines to vulnerable people. We also call on all countries to support rather than hinder or create barriers to such legitimate efforts, and we are ready to provide technical assistance to other countries and share our experience in the field of public health.

In view of our commitment to global health, we are happy to co-sponsor the draft resolution "Global health and foreign policy".

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

ASEAN recognizes the organic relationship between global health and foreign policy, based on our understanding that health threats, which are not confined within a country's boundaries, demand a high degree of international cooperation and coordination of policies and actions. Collective cooperation in health issues has therefore been considered to be one of the main components in the process of building the ASEAN community. Most recently, at their meeting in Singapore in July, the ASEAN Ministers of Health endorsed the ASEAN Strategic Framework on Health and Development (2010-2015) to guide ASEAN health cooperation activities in achieving our strategic objectives, as enshrined in the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint.

Since the adoption in Indonesia in 2000 of the vision of "Healthy ASEAN 2020", serious efforts have been made to meet the commitment to placing health at the centre of development and to strengthening ASEAN cooperation in the area of health to ensure that our peoples are mentally and physically healthy and living in harmony in safe environments.

In fact, regional cooperation in response to communicable diseases and pandemics, for example, has proved effective and timely in recent years, particularly during the alarming spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome, and avian and H1N1 influenza. Also, in the face of the current grave threat of dengue, which has had adverse effects on the lives of many millions around the world, with South-East Asia the most seriously affected region, ASEAN has decided to launch ASEAN Dengue Day on 15 June 2011 and every year thereafter in order to raise public awareness on dengue and promote region-wide prevention and control of the disease. Moreover, motivated by the fact that most emerging infectious diseases are of animal origin, as well as by the evident need for greater collaboration between the animal and public health sectors on zoonoses, we have adopted the ASEAN Framework and Work Plan to ensure that the necessary collaboration is put in place at the regional and national levels.

Beyond its intra-organizational cooperation in its efforts to properly address the challenges of health development, ASEAN attaches great importance to strengthening cooperation with outside partners, especially specialized United Nations agencies such as the World Health Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization and UNICEF, as well as other international organizations such as the World Organization for Animal Health. ASEAN and its dialogue partners, including China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, have also decided to develop a new cooperation plan and to support the development of collaborative networks in the areas of health promotion; capacity-building for health professionals; human resources development; the development of traditional, complementary and alternative medicines; and the formulation of coherent policies for health and social welfare development. In the same vein, the ASEAN Plus Three Partnership Laboratories have been established to further strengthen laboratory surveillance and networking in the ASEAN Plus Three countries.

ASEAN member States are proud of being on track to attain many of the Millennium Development Goals, as confirmed at the ASEAN-United Nations Summit held in Hanoi in October. At the same time, we are fully conscious that much remains to be done in

order to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals, and the health-related Goals in particular. We therefore count on the continued and enhanced cooperation of the United Nations and the international community in addressing global and regional health issues.

We call for closer links between global health and foreign policy through the better inclusion of global health as an important policy issue on the international agenda in as wide as possible a range of forums and frameworks of cooperation. For its part, ASEAN is committed to enhancing international cooperation in the area of health, and stands ready for future cooperation and partnership in this endeavour.

Mr. Gürber (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I wish first to thank the Secretary-General for his note of 22 October on global health and foreign policy (A/65/399). It shows that health is a major theme of foreign policy today and a key factor in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It also points to the need for greater cooperation at the international, regional and national levels to improve the coherence of our actions in the area of health and foreign policy.

Switzerland also welcomes the draft resolution on global health and foreign policy (A/65/L.27), negotiated within the framework of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The draft resolution, which Switzerland has co-sponsored, puts special emphasis on the health-related MDGs and the issue of governance for global health.

For Switzerland, the latter issue is a matter of concern. Together with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Switzerland is committed to offering training in the fields of diplomacy and health in order to help diplomats and health specialists to better understand current challenges in global health and foreign policy. Furthermore, at the national level, Switzerland is trying to implement the principles of coordination and coherence among the fields of health, development and foreign policy.

At the international level, the question of governance for global health is equally urgent. On the one hand, a complex architecture is emerging in the field of global health, with an ever-growing number of private and public actors. While the presence of a multitude of actors in the health field is to be welcomed, one cannot help but note that, in the

absence of effective coordination mechanisms, the achievement of the health-related MDGs will be jeopardized.

On the other hand, the growing interdependence among the various sectors of public policy is a fact we need to bear in mind in the conduct of our foreign policy. We therefore need to reflect on the coherence and effectiveness of the system in its entirety and to ensure that health systems are strengthened. In this context, the various sectoral initiatives, such as the Secretary-General's Joint Action Plan for Women's and Children's Health and the organization of a United Nations summit on non-communicable diseases, are to be welcomed for putting such crucial issues on the political agenda. They must not, however, result in a weakening of health systems.

In the Global Redesign Initiative report entitled "Ensuring Health for All", the World Economic Forum comments on the changing nature of global health:

"The gap between the real world of multiple actors and governance mostly limited to a few State entities renders such national and international governance increasingly inefficient, if not irrelevant."

Switzerland would like to see the launch of a process of reflection on governance for global health, failing which the interventions of the multitude of actors in the field risk being ineffective and counterproductive. By "governance", we mean mechanisms allowing the various actors involved to manage problems relating to global health jointly and coherently. It is a question not of creating new structures that would make the existing architecture even more cumbersome, but rather of creating rules of the game that are mutually acceptable.

The process of reflection on governance for global health should take place within the World Health Organization (WHO), which has the necessary legitimacy for initiating debates. According to its constitution, the WHO is the recognized authority for the management and coordination of international public health. This founding mandate needs to be reinterpreted and adapted to the realities of today. The WHO also needs to be endowed with the secure, stable funding required for the fulfilment of its mission.

In this context, Switzerland supports the process launched in January 2010 by the WHO Director-

General to redefine the organization's priorities and stabilize its financing sources. This process, which will mobilize the WHO Executive Board next January, covers a vast potential area of reform. Switzerland is conscious of the need for this reflection, just as we are concerned about questions of governance at the level of the United Nations system. Since the publication in 2006 of the report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on System-wide Coherence (A/61/583), significant progress has been made in terms of the coordination and coherence of United Nations operations. The health field needs to be included in this process.

Mr. Barton (United States of America): The United States delegation welcomes the fact that the General Assembly is united to promote global health and its link to foreign policy. Health is at the heart of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and central to progress on poverty eradication, socio-economic development, primary education for all, gender equality and partnering for development. In the light of the interdependence of the MDGs, it is important for Governments to consider the impact of policies on the health of their populations.

The United States Global Health Initiative is a top priority to which we have committed \$63 billion over six years. The principles of our Global Health Initiative include a woman- and girl-centred approach, strong country ownership and country-led plans, and building the sustainability of health systems. Working in more than 80 countries worldwide, the Global Health Initiative's goals address HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, maternal health, child health, nutrition, family planning and reproductive health, neglected tropical diseases and health systems. Strengthening the capacity and resiliency of health systems in the face of multiple public health and disease challenges is a key component. Given new health challenges, including the rising incidence of non-communicable diseases, cross-sectoral approaches are going to be the key to improved outcomes.

Beyond the Global Health Initiative, United States health diplomacy focuses on promoting pandemic preparedness, implementing the International Health Regulations, addressing environmental health issues and emerging infectious diseases, eradicating polio and responding to biosecurity threats.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the essential United Nations system leader, partner and convener in global health. WHO recognizes the importance of acting in concert with partners. There are many new health initiatives, public-private partnerships and increased international resources for health. These have had a positive impact and made us value coordination and coherence, especially at the country level. The United States Global Health Initiative seeks to focus and align cooperation with country-driven approaches. Other donor initiatives and partnerships are doing the same, recognizing the need for all country-level actors to work together to maximize impact and efficiencies.

The United States is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution on global health and foreign policy (A/65/L.27), and our delegation appreciates the spirit of cooperation of all negotiating partners. Progress in global health requires coherence in our health and foreign policies, and we believe that a fulsome partnership will advance our shared goals.

Mr. Osuga (Japan) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to start by expressing my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his note transmitting the report entitled "Global health and foreign policies" (A/65/399) under agenda item 124.

First and foremost, Japan fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Asian Group, which incorporates the policies and approaches my Government has promoted in this field, such as a holistic, comprehensive and multisectoral approach to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and its emphasis on the need to build sustainable health systems by strengthening community-based primary health care and developing human resources for health.

My delegation takes this opportunity to explain Japan's commitments and perspective on this agenda item. Global health is one of the main pillars of Japan's foreign policy. Health is an essential component of human security and a prosperous society. It is a fact, however, that reductions in the mortality rates of infants and pregnant women are still far short of the targets set in the MDGs. We need to exert additional, drastic efforts.

In September, at the United Nations High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Naoto Kan, announced Japan's new contributions in the field of global health (see A/65/PV.9). Japan will provide \$5 billion in this sector over the course of the five coming years, including a contribution of up to \$800 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. With this contribution and in cooperation with other partners, we sincerely hope that the lives of almost 700,000 mothers and more than 11 million children will be saved.

Furthermore, at the High-level Meeting Japan proposed an assistance model in maternal and child health to ensure a continuum of care from pre-pregnancy to after childbirth. The model — known as EMBRACE, for Ensure Mothers and Babies Regular Access to Care — seeks to deliver a sequence of health services, including prenatal and neonatal care, at facilities with quality equipment and personnel, as well as improved access to hospitals and immunization. My Government calls on developing countries, donors and international organizations to make concerted efforts to implement optimal assistance measures in maternal and child health.

I recall that the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting (resolution 65/1) refers to the ongoing efforts to define the notion of human security. The concept of human security calls for integrated, people-centred, bottom-up and multi-stakeholder approaches to addressing the needs of the most vulnerable people and communities through their protection and empowerment. That is why the Government of Japan is convinced that this concept is truly relevant and instrumental to our endeavour to attain the MDGs, in particular those related to health.

Finally, in order to follow up on the commitments undertaken at the High-level Plenary Meeting and lead the efforts of the international community towards achieving the MDGs, Japan has proposed the convening of an international conference next spring in Japan in order to strengthen coordination among a broad range of stakeholders, including Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Australia appreciates the opportunity to address the General Assembly on the

subject of global health and foreign policy, a crucial linkage that we need to understand better and manage effectively if the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are to be reached.

Global health issues have always been a priority for Australian Governments. We recognize that improved global health is critical to ending poverty, to achieving security and to promoting prosperity and equity. As a founding member of the World Health Organization (WHO), Australia applauds the role that organization plays to promote sensible health policies and strengthen health systems at the country level. WHO is, of course, one of the most regionalized specialized agencies, bringing it closer to the country level.

In our own region, the Asia-Pacific, Australia has had a long and productive collaboration with the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office, working with it to address non-communicable diseases, emerging infectious diseases and pandemic preparedness. We have committed \$160 million at present to address emerging infectious diseases with pandemic potential, including \$100 million for initiatives for influenza and pandemic preparedness in the Asia-Pacific region.

In recent years, Australia has increasingly taken a whole-of-Government approach to formulating responses to major global policy challenges, and certainly the national foreign policy debate has been informed by developments such as the SARS crisis, the HIV/AIDS challenge and the threat of pandemic influenza. We are acutely aware that years of development growth can be undermined or even reversed by an epidemic or by a major challenge to national health systems. Our own Foreign Minister himself is keenly engaged in ensuring that our foreign policy appropriately recognizes and reflects that reality, and Australia's national Department of Health and Ageing works in partnership very closely with our development agency, AusAID, to ensure policy and technical coherence on international development health strategies.

When we met in September at the MDG summit, we all expressed grave concern in particular about the slow progress being made on reducing maternal mortality and improving women's and children's health. We also acknowledged that making progress on the health-related MDGs would be essential to making headway on the other Goals. The Secretary-General's

Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health provided a much-needed crystallized view of the actions we are required to make if we are going to have progress towards MDGs 4 and 5. In support of that strategy, my own country has announced a plan to spend at least \$1.6 billion over the coming few years. We will increase that spending steadily so that it reaches \$500 million annually by 2015.

Next September, we will meet here in the Assembly to focus our attention on the challenge that non-communicable diseases pose to developing countries. We hope that next year's high-level meeting will emphasize the multisectoral actions required to address non-communicable diseases. Those include ensuring that trade and agricultural policies are supportive of the healthy lifestyles that prevent non-communicable diseases and giving greater effect to existing commitments under the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. We are supporting our neighbours in the Pacific to address non-communicable diseases. There is very high incidence of non-communicable diseases across the Pacific, and we look forward to working with Governments and development partners to further scale up successful approaches.

Finally, I would like to mention HIV/AIDS and the importance of policy coherence in this field. It has long been recognized that a foreign policy lens must be applied to this critical issue, which, as we know, is far more than just a health problem. That was demonstrated, for example, by the Security Council's consideration in 2000 of HIV/AIDS as a peace and security issue (See S/PV.4087 and S/PV.4172). The HIV/AIDS epidemic is a social, political, economic and cultural issue. It requires Governments to understand the multiple drivers of their own epidemics and to develop the best local response. It also requires international commitment and consensus to share our knowledge, develop best-practice approaches and generate funding to tackle the ongoing epidemic.

Australia is honoured to be co-facilitating with Botswana the process leading up to the United Nations high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS to be held in June in the context of the five-year review. That meeting comes at a critical juncture. Of every five people newly infected with HIV, only two have access to treatment. We need to do much, much better.

Australia itself has drawn on the success of our own domestic HIV/AIDS response to encourage progressive and evidence-based approaches in other countries that are grounded in strong partnership between Government and civil society. We understand the importance of the political, legal and policy environment to ensuring that those most at risk have access to services for HIV prevention, treatment and care in what is, after all, a major, critical public health issue. For example, we have taken a leading role in supporting harm-reduction approaches to prevent HIV infection among people who inject drugs. We have advocated for this approach with partner countries and through multiple United Nations channels, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. We have also helped partner countries to demonstrate the effectiveness of harm-reduction approaches in their own national settings.

To conclude, Australia is convinced that the MDGs can be achieved, including in the poorest countries, as long as we have renewed commitment, effective implementation and very much more intensified collective action by all Member States. It will be essential, of course, that we do this in partnership with a well-coordinated and coherent United Nations system. Recognizing the importance of the health-related MDGs, we must continue to ensure that these health challenges remain very high on the agenda of our own policymakers, including those focused on foreign policy objectives.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 124.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/65/L.27.

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to inform the Assembly that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.27, Guyana has become a sponsor.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.27?

Draft resolution A/65/L.27 was adopted (resolution 65/95).

The Acting President: I give the floor to the observer for the Holy See.

Reverend Bené (Holy See): My delegation takes this opportunity to acknowledge the leadership of the delegation of Brazil in carrying out the negotiations on the drafting of the resolution just adopted. While some of our proposals were not taken into account, others were and incorporated into the text.

Health is an invaluable good for the person and for society, and should be promoted, conserved and protected. The preservation of health necessitates dedicating the means, resources and energy necessary so that more people can enjoy life with lower incidence of disease and infirmity.

Unfortunately, the problem remains today that many populations in the world do not have access to the resources necessary to satisfy many fundamental needs, in particular with regard to health. For this reason, it is necessary to work with greater commitment at all levels, both domestically and internationally, to ensure that the right to health care is more than just acknowledged. This can be done by favouring those strategies that provide access to primary health care for all.

The world of health care cannot be removed from the demands of justice and the moral rules that must govern its administration to ensure that health care does not become inhuman, that is, contrary to the human dignity with which every member of the human family is endowed. In this regard, since the field of health remains an integral part of the existence of each member of the human family and of the common good, it is important to establish a true distributive justice that guarantees to all, on the basis of objective needs, basic health care.

For this reason, the love of justice, the protection of life from conception to its natural end, and respect for the dignity of every human being must always be upheld. These are fundamental ethical values and the common patrimony of universal morality and the basis of democratic coexistence.

While we note the various positive elements contained in the text, such as those concerning economic cooperation for development and the paramount importance of Millennium Development Goal 8, my delegation takes this opportunity to reaffirm once again all the reservations expressed at

the conclusion of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, especially as the Holy See does not consider abortion or abortion services to be a dimension of reproductive health and does not endorse any form of legislation that gives legal recognition to abortion.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 124?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I wish to inform members that, at the request of the main sponsor of draft resolution A/65/L.38, the Assembly will take up its consideration of agenda item 16, entitled “The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order”, on Friday, 10 December instead of today, Thursday, 9 December.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.