



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

61st plenary meeting
Friday, 6 December 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela, former President of the Republic of South Africa

The President: Before we proceed to the items on our agenda, it is my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela, former President of the Republic of South Africa, who passed away yesterday, 5 December 2013.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the representative of South Africa to convey our condolences to the Government and the people of South Africa and to the bereaved family of His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of President Mandela.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: Permit me to make a brief statement.

Today, in this assembly of nations, we mourn the loss of Mr. Nelson Mandela, one of the world's greatest global leaders, whose life and legacy transcend borders and will live on through the ages.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to convey my sincere condolences to his family and to the Government and the people of South Africa on the loss of the greatest architect and champion of the new South Africa, and indeed the new Africa. Madiba, as he

was affectionately known to his beloved family and his people, personified true democratic leadership, moral fortitude and heroic courage. He embodied the highest values of the United Nations and, by the example of his life and his actions, demonstrated the difference one person can make in the face of adversity, oppression and prejudice, while maintaining a disposition of humility, humour and modesty that is so rare among people of his stature.

The world looks to the legacy of President Mandela because he chose forgiveness over revenge and hope over despair. The anti-apartheid leader and Nobel laureate was a beloved figure around the world and a symbol of reconciliation in a country that was for generations the definition of racism. He became a prominent symbol of resistance and the face of the anti-apartheid movement that spread throughout South Africa and, ultimately, across the world.

We in the international community join with countless millions across our planet in mourning his death while at the same time celebrating his great deeds and triumphs. On 24 June 1964, Mr. Mandela was on trial for plotting to overthrow the then-apartheid Government of South Africa by force. The world will always remember his closing statement given in his own defence when he said:

“During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal

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 U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

13-59553 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to see realized. But ... if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

The expressions of both grief and unbridled praise by millions around the world remind us of the magnitude of our loss, the height of his achievements and the place within each of us that is lit up by true greatness. The United Nations family will continue to honour the legacy of Mr. Mandela on 18 July, designated by the General Assembly as Nelson Mandela International Day. Yet our best tribute to this illustrious son of Africa is to embrace his ideals, values and conviction. In doing so, we can emulate his contributions to peace in our world and ensure that the legacy of Madiba remains with us for all time.

I was very fortunate to have met the man during his lifetime, before he became President of South Africa and after. On both occasions, I can humbly say that the impact of meeting him was nothing short of awe-inspiring. To this very day, to the maximum extent possible, I have drawn personal inspiration from him and have tried to ensure that in this, my imperfect life, I live by his words:

“What counts is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”

I now give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson.

The Deputy Secretary-General: Today the world is united in mourning the passing of a most remarkable man. A few moments ago, the United Nations flag was lowered outside this Hall and at all United Nations duty stations around the world in honour of Nelson Mandela. I know that the thoughts of the Secretary-General, who is travelling, are with us here today.

But today we also celebrate Nelson Mandela’s historic legacy and inspirational life. There is so much to remember from the life of Nelson Mandela — courage, determination, farsightedness, political skills, generosity, kindness and wit. But in a world too often riven and divided by vicious cycles of violence and revenge, perhaps the most impressive of President Mandela’s gifts was his power of forgiveness, his ability to overcome bitterness and hatred. He once said that hating clouds the mind. It gets in the way of strategy. Leaders cannot afford to hate. That is what

makes Nelson Mandela so extraordinary. His fight was for all the people of South Africa. He gave up his own liberty in order to liberate all the people of South Africa from the odious injustice of apartheid.

But the end of his life is not the end of our struggle against all forms of injustice. We remember Nelson Mandela today, but we should carry his spirit with us every day. It means speaking out against prejudice and discrimination wherever we see their dark manifestations. It means standing up against the indignity and deprivation that millions of our fellow human beings still suffer around the world. It means building on the power of moral courage and universal values to triumph over brute force. Nelson Mandela never compromised on the equal value of all human beings. His whole life was a tribute to the dignity of man and to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We may never rise to the level of that great man, but we must always try, in our different ways, to live up to his unwavering commitment to our common humanity. The peoples of the world stood in solidarity with Nelson Mandela in his struggle against apartheid. We will forever remember his remarkable legacy, and we must continue to strive to walk in his footsteps, inspired by his life and his example.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mamabolo (South Africa): On behalf of His Excellency President Jacob Zuma, the Mandela family, the people of South Africa, of Africa and indeed the entire international community, we would like to express our sadness at the passing of our Founding Father of the democratic Republic of South Africa. We appreciate the condolences and tributes offered around Africa and the world. The Government and South Africa are humbled by the tributes that have streamed in from Governments, global institutions, civil society and millions of individuals around the world.

President Mandela was a patriot we shared with the world, and we continue to appreciate the extensive support he enjoyed around the globe during his decades of imprisonment in South Africa. We hope that as we revisit his lifelong contribution to humanity, we will also use that reflection to recommit ourselves to the values and practices he stood for. He cannot be replaced in person, but his legacy of selflessness and principled dedication to equality and justice lives on in South Africa and the world.

South Africa is grateful to the Assembly for the honour it bestowed on President Mandela by declaring 18 July, his birthday, as Nelson Mandela International Day. Let us use that day to maintain his legacy of service to humanity.

The President: I should like to inform members that I intend to convene a special meeting dedicated to the life and memory of President Nelson Mandela. The meeting will provide a further opportunity for the membership to pay tribute to President Mandela and his achievements as an icon of the anti-apartheid movement and a global statesman. The date and venue of the meeting will be announced in due course.

Agenda item 115 (continued)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(a) Election of one member of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/302/Add.1)

The President: Pursuant to decision 42/450, of 17 December 1987, and upon the nomination by the Economic and Social Council, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Members will recall that at its 40th plenary meeting, held on 30 October, the General Assembly elected five members to the Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2014.

Members will also recall that by its decision 2013/201 B, of 25 April 2013, the Economic and Social Council postponed the nomination of one member from the African States and one member from the Asia-Pacific States for election by the General Assembly for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2014. In that connection, the Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General (A/68/302/Add.1). As indicated in that document, by its decision 2013/201 E, of 7 November 2013, the Economic and Social Council nominated Morocco for election by the General Assembly for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2014 and expiring on 31 December 2016.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot, and there shall be no nominations. However, I would like to recall paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, whereby the

practice of dispensing with secret ballots for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election. In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on the basis of dispensing with the secret ballot?

It was so decided.

The President: May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare Morocco elected a member of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a term of office beginning on 1 January 2014 and expiring on 31 December 2016?

It was so decided.

The President: Members are reminded that the Economic and Social Council decided to further postpone the nomination of three members from the Group of Western European and other States for election by the General Assembly, two members for terms beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2014 and one member for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2015. It also decided to postpone the nomination of one member from the Group of Asia-Pacific States for a three year-term beginning on 1 January 2014 and expiring on 31 December 2016.

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

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of agenda and allocation of items

The President: Members will recall the General Assembly concluded its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 114 at its 34th plenary meeting, on 17 October. In order to enable the Assembly to consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 114, it will be necessary to reopen its consideration of the item.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to re-open its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 114 and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 114 *(continued)***Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs****(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council**

The President: Members will recall that, at its 34th plenary meeting, on 17 October, the Assembly elected Chad, Chile, Lithuania, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia as non-permanent members of the Security Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 2013.

Subsequently, the permanent representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, in his letter dated 12 November 2013 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/68/599), indicated that Saudi Arabia would not be in a position to assume its seat on the Council. In that regard, I have been informed by the Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group, in a note verbal dated 25 November 2013, that Jordan has been endorsed by the Asia-Pacific States to fill the resulting vacancy.

The outgoing non-permanent members from among the African and Asia-Pacific States are Morocco, Pakistan and Togo. Those three States cannot be re-elected. Their names therefore should not appear on the ballot papers. Apart from the five permanent members, the Security Council will include the following States in 2014 from among the African and Asia-Pacific States: Chad, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea and Rwanda. The names of those States therefore should also not appear on ballot papers. Pursuant to paragraph 3 of resolution 1991 A (XVIII), of 17 December 1963, the one non-permanent member should be elected from among the African and Asia-Pacific States.

In accordance with established practice, there is an understanding to the effect that the one State to be elected from among the African and Asia-Pacific States should be from the Asia-Pacific region. I should like to inform the Assembly that the candidate receiving the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting will be declared elected. If none of the candidates obtains a two-thirds majority there shall be additional ballots, voting being restricted to the two candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot.

Also, consistent with our practice, in case a tie vote should make it necessary to determine the candidate to be elected, there will be a special restricted ballot limited to those candidates that have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to those procedures?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting. In addition, ballot papers will only be given to the representative seated directly behind the country's nameplate.

We shall now begin the voting process. Members are requested to remain seated until all ballots have been collected.

Ballot papers will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers that have been distributed.

May I ask representatives to write on the ballot the name of the one State for which they wish to vote. A ballot will be declared invalid if it contains the name of more than one Member State from among the African and Asia-Pacific States. If a ballot paper includes both the name of a Member State that belongs to and the names of the Member States that are outside the African and Asia-Pacific States, the ballot remains valid but only the name of the Member State that belongs to the relevant region will be counted. The names of Member States that do not belong to that region will not be counted.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Del Águila Castillo (Guatemala), Mr. Nardi (Liechtenstein), Mr. Coulibaly (Mali), Mr. Valli (Monaco), Ms. Davaasuren (Mongolia) and Ms. Oanta (Romania) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 11 a.m. and resumed at 11.15 a.m.

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

<i>Group A — African and Asia-Pacific States</i>	
Number of ballot papers:	185
Number of invalid ballots:	2
Number of valid ballots:	183
Abstentions:	4
Number of members present and voting:	179
Required two-thirds majority:	120
Number of votes obtained:	
Jordan	178
Saudi Arabia	1

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority and the largest number of votes, Jordan was elected as a member of the Security Council for a two-year term beginning on 1 January 2014.

The President: I congratulate Jordan on its election as a member of the Security Council, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in the election.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 114.

Programme of work

The President: Before concluding, I should like to consult members regarding an extension to the work of the Fifth Committee.

Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 20 September, the General Assembly approved the recommendation of the General Committee that the Fifth Committee complete its work by Friday, 13 December. However, I have been informed by the Chair of the Fifth Committee that the Committee requests an extension of its work to Friday, 20 December, in the view that such an extension would facilitate reaching consensus on pending draft resolutions before it.

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly agrees to extend the work of the Fifth Committee until Friday 20 December 2013?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the items on its agenda for this meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.