



General Assembly

Seventieth session

72nd plenary meeting
Thursday, 10 December 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Lykketoft (Denmark)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Cardi (Italy),
Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 73 and 74 (continued)

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

Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/383)

Draft resolutions (A/70/L.25 and A/70/L.27)

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

**Reports of the Secretary-General (A/70/77 and
A/70/96)**

Draft resolutions (A/70/L.29 and A/70/L.30)

(b) Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/76)

Draft resolution (A/70/L.18)

(c) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke
in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to say that the
provision of humanitarian assistance, and assistance to

civilian populations, is one of the world's most noble endeavours, as long as it is based on, and motivated by, lofty moral and humanitarian principles alone and is not used for other ends that might be harmful to the stability and well-being of peoples of the world. Moreover, such humanitarian action must be in keeping with the guidelines set forth in resolution 46/182, reaffirmed in the draft resolutions before us, and must prioritize respect for national sovereignty and the role of the State concerned in the distribution of humanitarian assistance throughout its territory, as well as the principles of neutrality, integrity and non-politicization.

To resolve any humanitarian crisis, it is important to recognize the roots and causes of the crisis without politicization or bending reality or the facts in the service of pressing political agendas that exploit humanitarian assistance as a pretext. Resolving a crisis also entails a joint effort by the Government concerned and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in accordance with the provisions set forth in resolution 46/182, which help to mitigate the severity of humanitarian crises rather than manipulating, prolonging and exacerbating them to bring political pressure to bear on the Government concerned and to blackmail it so that it would make political concessions to the strongest and most influential. The alternative to that is creative chaos, which leads to the creation of a moderate opposition mercenary army and opens the borders to neighbouring countries and those who claim to carry out jihad and gangs that traffic refugees and bodily organs and then call all this moderate opposition.

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In this regard, it is important to clarify that the suffering of the Syrian people today, like the suffering of other peoples in other countries of the world, has the following causes. First, there is terrorism, which is the main reason for the outbreak of the humanitarian crisis in my country, Syria; and its worsening is due to terrorist acts that are perpetrated by armed terrorist groups. The delegation of my country regrets the fact that, except for a very passing reference to it in one paragraph, draft resolution A/70/L.29 does not include any reference to terrorism, as it is one of the root causes of humanitarian crisis, and this despite our repeated requests to include a stronger reference. It is paradoxical that some authors of the draft resolution while claiming to fight terrorism are the very same States that have worked to not include in the draft resolution a clear reference to the fact that terrorism is one of the main causes of the humanitarian crisis. They have intentionally ignored the terrorism used by the takfiri groups that believe in an obscure and backward Wahhabi ideology, which does not accept any divergence from it, legitimizes bloodshed and incites its followers to hate others. These elements are all incompatible with the United Nations agenda. Ignoring terrorism and the need to combat it over the past few years is what has led to its hysterical expansion, targeting innocent civilians all over the world. We have been warning against this possibility for a long time. Terrorism has reached a point now where it is targeting and blowing up a civilian Russian plane over the Sinai. It has affected Beirut, Tunisia, Paris, Baghdad, Mali, California, Nairobi and other countries; all those terrorists were recruited in Syria and Iraq and had come from the four corners of the world to sow the seeds of terror in the world.

The draft resolution on the humanitarian crisis in Syria requires the concerted efforts of all international actors in the region and the world in order to fight terrorism and to hold the countries that support these armed terrorist groups in my country accountable for financing, arming, training and sheltering them, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2199 (2015), 2178 (2014) and 2170 (2014). It is very important to launch an appeal from this rostrum to countries that participate in the bloodshed in Syria and claim to be providing humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people while they are really fabricating crises and supporting and financing terrorism in my country. In that context, it is also important to bear in mind the role played by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Syrian Golan and other occupied Arab territories since June 1967 in

cooperating with terrorist groups, such as Al-Nusra Front. That occupying Power rearrested the civilian Sedqi Al-Maqet, the Nelson Mandela of Syria, who had been imprisoned for 27 years for having documented through sound and imagery the relationship between Israel and the terrorist Al-Nusra Front in the occupied Golan.

Secondly, we must look at the serious economic consequences of unilateral coercive action. This action, unprecedented in the history of international relations, has exacerbated the economic and humanitarian situation in my country. In that regard, it is important to clarify the painful scenario, which is repeated on an annual basis, when this draft resolution is discussed. The Syrian Government and some friendly nations wish to include a paragraph on the negative impact of these measures on the civilian populations and their role in exacerbating the suffering of children and women and the worsening of the humanitarian situation. Yet some authors of the draft resolution, for the fourth consecutive year, are insisting on eliminating any reference to those measures.

Moreover, the representatives of those countries still take pride in the “heroic” action they are undertaking in continuing to impose sanctions on women and children in Syria, depriving them of the basic elements of life after having done the same thing to millions of innocent Iraqis. It is paradoxical that this draft resolution refers to resolution 70/1, of 25 September 2015, concerning the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is a balanced and objective resolution, which we participated in creating. The draft resolution refers to lifting coercive economic measures that have a negative impact on the country and that are an obstacle to implementing the 2030 Agenda. However, this “humanitarian” draft resolution does not need a paragraph like that on the same topic. How can we hope that Member States will be able to implement the sustainable development agenda when the international community is imposing unjust sanctions and coercive measures on it? That is the very height of hypocrisy.

My country’s Government is eagerly awaiting the holding of the first World Humanitarian Summit, given our belief in the importance of humanitarian work. However, the Summit must address the root causes of the outbreak of humanitarian crises and the elements that worsen them. It must also address the issue of the distribution of humanitarian assistance,

most of which is financed across the border without any coordination with the country concerned in order to serve the political interests and agendas of some organizations, which are working outside the umbrella of the United Nations and its supervision. That goes against international humanitarian conventions and belies the principles that guide the United Nations in such situations. Sometimes that assistance also ends up helping the terrorist organizations, which prolongs the conflict.

The role of Member States should be essential and important in drafting any outcome document of the Summit. The non-politicized and effective participation of all nations in the Summit will lead to a non-binding document. We will then be compelled to negotiate a second time through an intergovernmental process in order to arrive at a consensus-based formulation that reflects the different positions of different Governments.

We hope that the Summit will provide a transparent and non-politicized space for dialogue to take place and that it will not be used as a platform for promoting any political agenda under the pretext of humanitarian action. We hope that the various provisions of the Charter of the United Nations will be upheld and that the voices of donor countries are not the only ones that are heard. The Summit should involve the direct action of the United Nations, and it is important not to change the objective of humanitarian assistance and, especially, to observe the principles of full respect for national sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs and full cooperation with national authorities in providing humanitarian assistance.

In that connection, I would like to express our regret with regard to the choice of Istanbul as the venue for the Summit, since the Turkish regime is facilitating the entry of terrorists into Syria and helps to train them and even finance them. The Turkish regime has also been helping to finance Daesh with archeological artefacts and oil. How can that country be the host of such a conference when it is the main cause of one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world? How can we ask the Turkish Government to carry out the task of welcoming the first humanitarian assistance summit when, through its management of its borders with Syria and Iraq, it has participated in the bloodshed?

This is just one of the many paradoxes. We could mention quite a few others, such as the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre in Saudi Arabia, a country

that is the main centre for propagating terrorism and extremism around the world. There is another centre in Qatar. Saudi Arabia uses foreigners who are recruited through the Blackwater company. Now we see the results: 14 mercenaries working for the Blackwater company were killed on the outskirts of the city of Taiz in Yemen. In Qatar, there is another centre called the Alliance of Civilizations. Qatar works day and night to instigate war and create interfaith and interreligious problems and crises among countries. I therefore wonder if the United Nations is straying from its founding vision? Should we strive to maintain legality and the protection of the rights of all Member States, be they strong or weak, large or small?

Mr. Minami (Japan): At the outset, I would like to commend Under-Secretary-General Stephen O'Brien and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for their tireless efforts in emergency humanitarian situations. Their activities are all the more important as we face new and difficult challenges in the humanitarian field.

The world is facing several unprecedented humanitarian crises today. In many parts of the world we are seeing protracted crises, many severe natural disasters and a huge number of displaced people. In addition, climate change is also expected to have an exacerbated impact on disasters related to weather events. As we all know, the *Global Humanitarian Overview* estimates that \$20.1 billion is required to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance in 2016.

It is obvious that humanitarian funding cannot keep up with the continued growth of humanitarian needs. In addition, we must strengthen development assistance in order to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and increase climate-change-related financing. It is also apparent that financial contributions from traditional donors alone are simply not enough to match such immense needs. New approaches, such as broadening the donor base and mobilizing domestic resources, are important in that context.

Furthermore, we have to address the root causes of humanitarian crises rather than continuously providing only reactive emergency assistance. To that end, we must first strive to find political solutions to protracted conflict-related crises. We need to recognize that the Security Council, the organ that has the primary responsibility to achieve such solutions, has been unable

to produce substantive results over the past several years. Japan, which will be a member of the Security Council beginning next year, stands ready to make maximum efforts to bear its part of this responsibility.

Secondly, we should emphasize the importance of conflict prevention. If a conflict arises, the United Nations often sends peacekeeping troops and humanitarian workers on the ground. But we should remind ourselves that investment in prevention is less expensive than the cost of the peacekeeping operations and the humanitarian assistance.

Thirdly, both humanitarian and development actors should collaborate closely from the outset, or even before the outbreak, of a crisis. We would like to encourage development actors to start their work at the early stages of a crisis. At the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the importance of preparedness for future disasters was stressed by many participants. That concept is reflected in many paragraphs of the draft resolutions that we will be adopting today.

The World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul in May 2016 is an ideal opportunity for various stakeholders to gather, discuss and collaborate on common humanitarian issues. Japan is eager to contribute to the summit process towards Istanbul in order to find durable solutions for, among others, protracted displacement issues, through cooperating with development and humanitarian actors, as well as host communities. In that regard, we note that the process towards Istanbul and the expected outcome of the Summit have gradually been made clearer by the Secretariat in recent weeks. We expect them to be further clarified. We also strongly hope that the summit process will adequately engage Member States so that they can feel a sense of ownership of the process and the summit itself.

In concluding my statement, allow me to stress that Japan, as a strong advocate of human security, will continue to work for the further improvement of humanitarian situations all over the world. We look forward to working with various stakeholders, such as Member States and United Nations agencies, for the important upcoming events next year, especially the World Humanitarian Summit in May and the summit on migrants and refugees in September.

Mr. Roet (Israel): Providing aid to others in their time of need is at the core of our shared humanity, and at the centre of the mission of this institution.

As the world continues to become smaller and more interconnected, supplying relief and resources to where they can offer the most benefit is increasingly the best choice for the future of our common planet. Now more than ever, it is vital that Member States, non-governmental organizations and the private sector coordinate an effective humanitarian response. This May, world leaders will gather in Istanbul for the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit. Israel welcomes that important opportunity to strengthen partnerships and to improve collective humanitarian action to help those most desperately in need.

Tragically, 2015 has been a year of devastating humanitarian crises, earthquakes and epidemics, sectarian fights and severe famines. Millions of people around the world live in dire conditions, lacking even the most basic of human requirements. The United Nations is leading international efforts to eradicate hunger, combat poverty and provide basic health care all over the world. However, the scale of the problem is staggering, and much more must be done. According to estimates published by the United Nations this week, as many as 87.6 million people in 37 different countries are in urgent need of humanitarian aid. All of us in this Hall know the disheartening facts on the ground. In Somalia, a devastating drought has left 1 million people at risk of starvation, at the same time as the country is being terrorized by Al-Shabaab. In the Central African Republic, a conflict that has dragged on for three years has led to the displacement of 1 million people. Ongoing insecurity and logistical constraints impede humanitarian operations, especially in the more remote areas. In South Sudan, large segments of the population face acute food insecurity, and the country only recently recovered from a cholera outbreak, which affected more than 1,800 people and led to at least 47 deaths.

In the Middle East, the combustible combination of failing States and destabilizing terrorist groups has led to the explosion of violence, with millions of innocents caught in the inferno. In Yemen, a sectarian conflict has devolved into a civil war, resulting in one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world, with four out of five Yemenis in need of assistance. In Syria the brutal violence rages on as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and other groups continue their reign of terror, and the Al-Assad regime continues to assault its own people using conventional and non-conventional weapons. The horrific conflict has left 250,000 dead,

nearly 7 million internally displaced and 4 million forced to flee their home country to seek safe refuge abroad. The lack of access to besieged areas and the deterioration of civilian infrastructure have led to a humanitarian catastrophe on a scale not seen since the Second World War. The availability of safe drinking water in Syria has declined by approximately 50 per cent since 2011, and by as much as 80 per cent in Aleppo and Hama. Over a quarter of all schools in Syria can no longer be used because they have been destroyed, damaged or are sheltering displaced families. The impact on Syrian children is particularly devastating, as the lack of educational opportunity threatens the future of the next generation.

I would like to personally thank the Syrian representative for finally clearing up for all of us the real reason behind Syrian suffering. It is Israel. It is not the Government he represents so eloquently, nor its gassing of its own people. Based on the crooked conspiracy theory that we heard a few minutes ago, Israel is the cause of all. Any reasonable real representative of the Syrian people, not of the Government, would have stood up in the Hall to thank Israel for providing humanitarian assistance to, and saving the lives of, its people in spite of the fact that most of them have ill intentions towards Israel.

The costs of taking action are high, but the price for not taking action is even higher. We must not allow the challenges to disrupt the lifesaving work of distributing vital humanitarian aid: food, water, shelter, health services and medicine to those who need it most. Israel is committed to extending humanitarian aid whenever and wherever it is needed. Earlier this year in the days immediately following the devastating earthquake that rocked Nepal, Israel deployed search-and-rescue teams and set up a field hospital, treating 1,600 patients, saving dozens of lives and even delivering babies. Israel is a small country, but our delegation to Nepal was the second-largest delegation on the ground.

When the Ebola outbreak struck West Africa, Israel joined in the international effort to contain the disease and mitigate its consequences. We sent basic medical equipment and drugs to Sierra Leone and protective gear to the African Union headquarters, and dispatched doctors to Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire to help strengthen the local capacity for emergency preparedness. Israel was also the largest donor per capita to the United Nations Ebola Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund, with a total donation of \$8 million.

Israel has engaged in humanitarian outreach in the aftermath of disasters all over the world. Israel was on the ground in Haiti after the earthquake; was one of the first teams to arrive in Japan following the tsunami; and established a field hospital in the Philippines in the wake of a typhoon. Those efforts represent the spirit of our people and the character of our nation. As Prime Minister Netanyahu said, that is the true face of Israel — a country that offers aid over any distance at any moment that it is needed.

Israel's humanitarian outreach efforts are not limited to endeavours overseas. Israel makes continuous efforts to improve the well-being of the Palestinian people, both in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. Despite the constant threat posed to our citizens by rocket attacks from Hamas-controlled Gaza, Israel has been doing its utmost to assist in the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. Israel has been working closely with the United Nations to facilitate the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism. Thus far, construction is under way on 267 of the 471 approved projects, and 2,832 houses are being rebuilt. Israel has upgraded the Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings, resulting in an increased capacity of 850 trucks per day. A total of 2.6 million tons of building materials for the Reconstruction Mechanism, the rebuilding of roads and for the numerous projects funded by the international community have been transferred into Gaza. Despite all of those efforts, the full reconstruction of Gaza will be achieved only when the Palestinian Authority assumes a more substantive role in Gaza. That has been recognized in the draft resolution entitled "Assistance to Palestinian People", which we are about to take action on today, and which stresses,

"the importance of the effective exercise by the Palestinian Authority of its full government responsibilities in the Gaza Strip in all fields, including through its presence at the Gaza crossing points" (*A/70/L.18, twenty-seventh preambular paragraph*).

Throughout the years, we have heard many in the Hall blame Israel for the situation in Gaza, and question its actions. We have even heard the Palestinian observer today (see A/70/PV.71), as usual, refuse to take any responsibility for their situation, speaking about peace while defining the only democracy in the Middle East and possible partner for peace as a regime. Such rhetoric is unhelpful and does not provide an answer as to why the Palestinian Authority continues to evade

its responsibilities and to avoid resuming governance in Gaza.

Over the past three months, Israeli citizens have been stabbed in the streets, shot on their way to work and deliberately run over while waiting for the bus. Despite those daily acts of terror, despite the incitement by the Palestinian Authority, we will continue our humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people and will continue to work to encourage strong Palestinian institutions and a vibrant economy. We will not allow the wave of terror to get in the way of our commitment to humanitarian aid. However, humanitarian support and efforts alone will not bring peace and prosperity to the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples. Once again, we call on the Palestinian Authority to resume direct negotiations — the only path to an enduring solution to the conflict.

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to all of the humanitarian workers from Member States around the world, United Nations personnel and the countless other individuals who have dedicated their lives to the service of those in need. Their tireless efforts, which have had a life-changing impact on the lives of millions of people around the world, are all too often underappreciated. Let us always be inspired by their compassion, dedication and kindness in even the most difficult of circumstances.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 49/2, of 19 October 1994, I now give the floor to the observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Madiwale (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), allow me to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to make a statement during this important debate.

As many have noted, we live in a time of unprecedented humanitarian need. There are 60 million forcibly displaced people around the world, seemingly unending protracted conflicts, natural disasters of increasing frequency and intensity, as well as those struggling to recover from the impacts of health emergencies. At the same time, there has never been a greater gap between the needs on the ground and the resources available to meet them. As a result, the humanitarian community is finding it difficult to keep up with an ever-growing caseload. It is clear

that the current arrangements and business model of humanitarian action are not sufficient to meet the needs and aspirations of affected people.

The year 2015 has been a critical one for multilateral agreements, many of which have important implications for humanitarian action. Earlier this year, a new framework for disaster risk reduction was agreed upon in Sendai. A new financing for development framework was agreed upon in Addis Ababa, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the Sustainable Development Goals were endorsed at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda here in New York. As we speak, negotiators in Paris are working tirelessly to arrive at an ambitious agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process to address climate change. Each of those agreements has, in one way or another, recognized the importance of bridging humanitarian and development action. That bridge — in programmes, financing and approaches — is critical if we are to effectively respond to ever-growing humanitarian needs. Allow me to make just three points in that regard.

First, the principle of leaving no one behind is firmly entrenched in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, that principle cannot be applied without addressing the needs of those caught up in humanitarian crises. That means that people affected must not only be provided with critical life-saving assistance but also with basic services, such as health and education, that make life viable in the long term. In order to that, it is critical that humanitarian and development actors address short- and long-term needs simultaneously. They will have to cooperate to a much greater degree. And development resources must be made available on development time scales in fragile contexts.

Secondly, this message is particularly urgent with regard to the current displacement crisis. For some time now, the humanitarian community has been warning that this scale of humanitarian operations is unsustainable and insufficient to provide for the protection, basic needs and lifesaving assistance to refugees, migrants and their host communities. In order to address the present crisis in the Mediterranean, we need both a humane response to refugees and migrants on Europe's shores as well as a firm commitment from the global community to assist those that host them. In that context, we are encouraged by the emerging

discussion on how to support refugee-hosting countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, countries that should be able to access development funds and financial instruments to improve the lives of displaced people, as well as that of their own citizens. We welcome in that regard the recent initiatives from the international financial institutions to provide concessional loans and grants to those countries.

Thirdly, unless properly addressed, climate change threatens to become the greatest driver of humanitarian need in the next century. It is critical that Governments arrive at an ambitious agreement in Paris, one that supports vulnerable countries and communities to adapt to climate change and address its already inevitable impacts. In that regard, investing in disaster risk reduction and harnessing co-benefits with climate change adaptation will be extremely important. Furthermore, adequate and predictable funding must materialize to address risk. Despite the fact that we all agree that prevention is better than cure, funding for risk reduction remains woefully inadequate.

Let us build on the strong recognition of those issues in the 2015 agreements to mobilize action on the ground.

As we discuss these critical issues today, the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross, 190 national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and 162 State parties to the Geneva Conventions have gathered in Geneva for the thirty-second International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. There, discussions are under way on a number of critical issues that will impact the humanitarian community for years to come, including discussions around sexual and gender-based violence, disaster laws and strengthening respect for international humanitarian law, as well as new pledges on resilience, climate change and disaster risk reduction. This week, the IFRC's Secretary General launched the One Billion Coalition for Resilience, an initiative that aims to engage 1 billion people to take active steps to improve their health, safety and well-being. We know that such an ambitious goal requires working with others, and we invite all those who share our vision to join us in that work.

The IFRC and its 190 national societies have been working to assist vulnerable people for nearly 150 years. We will continue to mobilize the power of humanity to provide life-saving assistance to vulnerable people,

and we will continue to work with Governments in our auxiliary function to deliver services to the last mile.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 45/6, of 16 October 1990, I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Spoerri (International Committee of the Red Cross): I thank you, Sir, for the giving the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) this opportunity to share its observations regarding some of the challenges to humanitarian action in armed conflict.

First, in an exceptional joint press conference held on 30 October, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and ICRC President Peter Maurer underscored the importance recognizing that much of the humanitarian suffering we are witnessing today is the result of a blatant lack of compliance with international humanitarian law by both State and non-State parties to armed conflict. It is they, not humanitarian organizations, who bear the primary responsibility for protecting civilians under their control and ensuring that their basic needs are met. It is also urgent for other States, both individually and collectively, to impress upon the parties to a conflict the need to abide by their legal obligations, including those governing access by impartial humanitarian organizations.

Secondly, further efforts must be made to improve the impact of humanitarian action. In spite of important initiatives taken among humanitarian actors in recent years, notably with regard to coordination, the lack of access and security remains an important obstacle in the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection. That is due mainly to frequent problems of acceptance among parties to a conflict. For that reason, Governments should make every effort to reach renewed consensus on apolitical humanitarian action, including by not sponsoring or limiting humanitarian action for ulterior motives. That will help bring about a working environment in which humanitarian action can reach its full potential. It is also incumbent upon humanitarian organizations to live by humanitarian principles in public debates as well as in their operations. Organizations should refrain from espousing humanitarian principles that they are not willing or able to adhere to in practice, at the cost of fuelling distrust towards the entire humanitarian sector.

Thirdly, greater attention and understanding should be devoted to the question of how to improve the

inclusion and promotion of local action in the overall humanitarian response. The ICRC's approach to this issue includes further developing the capacities of national societies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, supporting local medical services and providing armed forces with training in international humanitarian law. However, in highly polarized situations such as armed conflict, local humanitarian actors may be viewed with suspicion for a number of reasons, including perceived or alleged ethnic, religious or political affiliations. In such cases, they may be prevented from providing humanitarian assistance to victims across enemy lines and from actively engaging in protection and assistance activities with the parties to the conflict. In such cases, experience shows that international humanitarian organizations may be subject to fewer restrictions and thus more effective. The ICRC therefore believes that in the interests of the victims we must take full advantage of the strengths of both local and international organizations rather than favouring one over the other. The best approach is one based on the prevailing circumstances and in a logic of complementarity and responsible partnership.

Fourthly, the links between humanitarian and development planning and financing should be closer. Because many conflicts go on for years or even decades, the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations increasingly engage in development-related work, supporting basic services and critical infrastructure in areas such as health care, water and sanitation, electricity, veterinary care and agriculture. Owing to insufficient development spending, millions of people come to depend on such services to survive. Although they represent long-term commitments for humanitarian organizations, particularly when carried out in urban areas, they are subject to the constraints of short-term annual humanitarian budgets. Existing financing models should therefore be adapted to enable humanitarian organizations to plan and budget for this type of work over a period of several years.

Humanitarian and development organizations must also learn to work together in a way that better serves the needs of their beneficiaries. For its part, the ICRC is actively seeking to strengthen its cooperation with development organizations and work with them more systematically. Our commitment to independence and neutrality, which are critical to our ability to reach victims on all sides, may sometimes limit the situations and areas in which such cooperation can take place.

There are nevertheless many ways in which cooperation is both possible and desirable.

It is the ICRC's view that real progress will hinge on the ability to address these various challenges. Key to that is recognition that the international humanitarian system is based on three distinct pillars — the United Nations system, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organizations — all of which possess particular strengths and weaknesses. The approach should be geared not to fusing the three, by encouraging them to work the same way and on the same issues, but rather to capitalizing on their individual strengths. The ICRC hopes that the General Assembly's deliberations and the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit will help bring that about, and result in tangible improvements in the lives of the many millions who fall victim to armed conflict every year. We stand ready to share our views and experience in that regard.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 73 and its sub-items (a) to (c) and agenda item 74.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/70/L.25, A/70/L.27, A/70/L.29, A/70/L.30 and A/70/L.18.

The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/70/L.25, entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/70/L.25: Mongolia, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/70/L.25?

Draft resolution A/70/L.25 was adopted (resolution 70/104).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/70/L.27, entitled

“Participation of volunteers, ‘White Helmets’, in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/70/L.27: Andorra, Brazil, Canada, China, Georgia, Honduras, India, Indonesia, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Spain, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Turkey.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/70/L.27?

Draft resolution A/70/L.27 was adopted (resolution 70/105).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/70/L.29, entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/70/L.29: Mozambique, Panama, the Republic of Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Turkmenistan.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/70/L.29?

Draft resolution A/70/L.29 was adopted (resolution 70/106).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/70/L.30, entitled “International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/70/L.30: Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/70/L.30?

Draft resolution A/70/L.30 was adopted (resolution 70/107).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/70/L.18, entitled “Assistance to the Palestinian people”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/70/L.18: Andorra, Australia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/70/L.18?

Draft resolution A/70/L.18 was adopted (resolution 70/108).

The Acting President: One delegation has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind delegations that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made from their seats.

Mr. Canay (Turkey): We categorically deny the allegations made by the representative of the Syrian regime, which has lost all of its legitimacy. What we do for the brotherly Syrian people, in close cooperation with international organizations, including the United Nations, takes place before the eyes of the international community. I would like to emphasize that Turkey will continue to stand by the people of Syria.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of agenda item 73 and sub-items (a) to (c), and agenda item 74.

Agenda item 16 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Draft resolution (A/70/L.21)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on agenda item 16 and adopted resolutions 70/19 and 70/20 at its 66th plenary meeting, on 3 December.

I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to introduce draft resolution A/70/L.21.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): On behalf of its sponsors, I have the honour to introduce, under agenda item 16, draft resolution A/70/L.21, entitled "A world against violence and violent extremism". Let me first express my sincere gratitude to all the sponsors of the draft resolution and all other delegations for their constructive participation and support during the open and transparent consultations that my delegation conducted. Their proposals, suggestions and interventions made the draft resolution more robust and helped to accommodate the views of different Member States. The consensus and cross-regional sponsorship also underscore the universal recognition of the need to act on the pressing global challenges of violence and violent extremism.

This draft resolution is a follow-up to and an update of resolution 68/127, which my delegation took pride in submitting to the Assembly in 2013 and which was adopted by consensus. The idea behind that resolution was presented by His Excellency Mr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in his address to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session (see A/68/PV.6). The idea was an offshoot of the overarching theme of his presidential campaign platform, which

called for interaction, tolerance, moderation and prudence over violence and extremism.

Violent extremism and its side-effects, including sectarian violence, have been on the rise since the first resolution on this topic was adopted in 2013. In the wake of the atrocities committed by the extremist groups in Syria and Iraq in the past two years and the recent cruelties in Paris, Beirut, Egypt, Ankara and recently the United States and elsewhere, it is more significant and relevant than ever that the General Assembly pronounce itself once more on these challenges. In our globalized world, where threats recognize no borders, these challenges can be thwarted only through the joint efforts of the entire international community. Dialogue, moderation, tolerance and human rights are the most effective antidotes to violent extremism, which tries to twist religions and pervert human minds towards death and destruction.

It is therefore important that the international community and its individual Member States adopt effective measures along this line and implement them with a view to dealing with the conditions conducive to the genesis and spread of violent extremism. In this respect, it is important to avoid associating violent extremism with any nationality or religion. In fact, those who blame religions and engage in hate speech against the followers of divine religions, fanning the flames of discriminatory exclusion, play right into the terrorists' hands and help them to recruit more members and spread heinous extremist ideologies. By reaffirming this point, the General Assembly, as the sole universal body, provides a solid basis for promoting and institutionalizing the fight against violent extremism and sectarian violence at their roots.

The draft resolution means to serve as a call to break the endless repetition of the past, uphold the concept of citizenship over sectarian allegiances, place the next generation's prosperity above the settling of past scores, and look to the future with hope and prudent moderation as the master key. By adopting the draft resolution, all Member States would also concur that, in dealing with the threat of violence and violent extremism, we all need to cooperate and there is no room for a zero-sum game in any field.

Apart from certain basic technical updates to the first resolution on a world against violence and violent extremism, this draft resolution also incorporates a few additional elements. It recalls and reaffirms measures

taken at the national and multilateral levels and reaffirms the emphasis placed by the latest review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on the need to unite against violent extremism. It recalls with appreciation the high-level General Assembly thematic debate on countering violent extremism, held on 21 and 22 April.

It also recognizes local, national, regional and multilateral initiatives aimed at addressing the grievances that drive violent extremism, and the effort made by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, including through organizing the conference, held in June 2015, on “Youth and the Internet: fighting radicalization and extremism”, and notes increasing awareness of the need for a comprehensive approach to prevent and counter violent extremism and to address the conditions conducive to its spread.

In the operative part, it encourages Member States to increase their understanding of the drivers of violent extremism, particularly for women and youth, so as to develop targeted and comprehensive solutions to this threat. It takes note of the intention of the Secretary-General to propose a plan of action to prevent violent extremism, and requests him to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the present draft resolution.

Finally, allow me to express my sincere hope that the draft resolution will gain the broadest possible support and be adopted by consensus. That will help accelerate coordination and cooperation among States towards addressing the growing problems emanating from violent extremism.

Before concluding, let me make an oral correction to paragraph 15 of A/70/L.21 to read “takes note of”, instead of “notes”, as it is in the submitted draft.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/70/L.21, entitled “A world against violence and violent extremism”, as orally corrected.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have

become sponsors of A/70/L.21: Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, the Philippines, Portugal, Switzerland and Tunisia.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/70/L.21, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/70/L.21, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 70/109).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Roet (Israel): Israel fully supports the noble vision of calling for the world to unite against violence and violent extremism. The content of resolution 70/109 is commendable and praiseworthy.

The problem with today’s vote is not with the message, but with the messenger. For the second time, one of the world’s most violent and extreme regimes has promoted a resolution against violence and extremism. Iran calling for an end to violence is like a ventriloquist calling for the puppet to keep quiet. In reality, the behaviour of Iran stands in complete contradiction to the words of the resolution. There is a word for this — it is “hypocrisy”. When the United Nations gives Iran a platform for this pretence at international legitimacy, there is a word for that as well — it is “complicity”. The audacity of Iran — a regime that hangs gays, stones women, imprisons journalists and executes political opponents — in promoting a resolution affirming “human rights and fundamental freedoms” is simply staggering.

The resolution recognizes that “a primary responsibility of each State is to ensure a peaceful and violence-free life for its people”. The resolution goes further and underlines the “vital importance of... instilling respect for life”. I repeat, “instilling respect for life”. Yet, Iran executed over 700 of its citizens in the first few months of 2015 alone, including at least two children. That is an average of over three executions a day and a sharp increase from last year. So much for respect for life.

The courts that order such executions are completely lacking in independence and impartiality,

and the death penalty can be imposed for crimes ranging from blasphemy to adultery. The fourth preambular paragraph of the resolution affirms the promotion of

“respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction... as to race, colour, sex [or] political opinions”,

and paragraph 2 explicitly condemns all forms of violence against women. That might sound good, but in Iran, women are forced to wear head coverings in public and can be arrested by the so-called morality police, who patrol the streets with batons, for failing to comply. The Iranian actress Sadaf Taherian was forced to flee Iran after posting photos of herself without a headscarf on Instagram and Facebook, and for expressing opinions that were “unacceptable” to the regime. The World Economic Forum has ranked Iran 141st out of 145 countries for having the worst record on women and the gender gap with men. So much for respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

The resolution has much to say as well about the “right to freedom of expression, particularly by the media and new technologies, including the Internet”. Yes, members heard me correctly. The Iranian-led resolution emphasizes the right to use media and new technologies as an avenue of free expression. Maybe someone should tweet that part of the resolution to Solmaz Ikdar, an Iranian journalist sentenced to three years in jail for insulting the Supreme Leader. Iran is second on the Freedom House list of the world’s most censored countries. Iranian journalists, bloggers and social media activists have been arrested and sentenced to harsh prison sentences for their activities online, and websites continue to be blocked, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. So much for the right to freedom of expression guaranteed by the resolution.

The shamelessness of Iran in advancing this resolution cannot mask its shameful record of human rights abuses, of exporting terror and of destabilizing the Middle East. Iran embodies the very opposite of the principles it claims to affirm in the resolution, “to develop friendly relations among nations... and to strengthen universal peace.” Sponsoring the resolution does not change the reality. Iran is the world’s leading State sponsor of terrorism. Terror groups such as Hamas and Hizbullah and other regional proxies operate with Iranian funds and at Iranian instruction. It is a safe bet

to say that across the Middle East, where there is terror, there is Iranian involvement.

In a region of the world already threatened by an explosion of violent extremism, Iran continues to ignite conflicts and inflame sectarian divides. The subversive and destabilizing hand of Iran can be found in every corner of the region, and Iran plans to make things even worse. Just last month, Hossein Salami, the Deputy Commander of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said:

“We ourselves are dictating the new literature and language of Muslims’ struggle against the West. Therefore, we should be ready to manage multiple direct and proxy wars.”

The Iran that promoted the resolution before us today is the same Iran that is reported to have tested a mid-range ballistic missile last week, in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions. And let us never forget that as we speak, Iranian riches, resources and Revolutionary Guards are actively sustaining the Al-Assad regime.

Iran is cynically taking advantage of the prestige of the United Nations to portray itself as a State seeking peace and moderation. Iran’s brazen hypocrisy in supporting this resolution with one hand, while it sows the seeds of terror and instability with the other, is intended to draw attention from its aggression against States of the region and its oppression of its own people.

Israel joined the consensus to demonstrate its support for the ideals set out in the resolution and for the rights of the Iranian people. However, the international community must not allow Iran to use the United Nations as a platform for whitewashing its crimes and, by so doing, besmirch the integrity of this institution. We must not let Iran succeed in evading responsibility for its actions.

Mr. Norman (Canada): Canada joined the consensus on resolution 70/109, entitled “A world against violence and violent extremism”. Canada is a strong supporter of human rights and condemns the targeting of civilians, which violates international humanitarian law. All citizens have the right to live free from violence and discrimination. In order to achieve a world without violence, the rights of all people must be respected. Recognizing the role of each State in ensuring a peaceful society, and mindful of the objectives outlined within the resolution, we urge all States, in particular

the sponsor of the resolution, to comply with their human rights obligations, including for women, ethnic minorities, and all religious communities.

Ms. Connelly (United States of America): The United States joined the consensus today on resolution 70/109, entitled “A world against violence and violent extremism”, because we continue to support initiatives at the United Nations to advance the international community’s efforts to counter violent extremism. The United States sees preventing and countering violent extremism as a core element of our comprehensive approach to countering terrorism. Countering violent extremism is critically important to our efforts to combat terrorism and, as President Obama has said,

“our military and intelligence efforts are not going to succeed alone; they have to be matched by political and economic progress to address the conditions that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant has exploited in order to take root.”

Whether non-State actors or Governments, those who kill innocent people, disenfranchise large segments of the population or foment sectarian conflict are acting in a way that is contrary to the values of tolerance, reconciliation, mutual understanding, non-violence and inclusive societies called for in the resolution. The United States is taking important steps to address the underlying social, political and economic trends that terrorists exploit, using whole-of-society approaches that respect human rights and the rule of law.

Both at home and abroad, our efforts to counter violent extremism encompass preventive aspects of counter-terrorism, as well as interventions to counter the attraction of extremist movements and ideologies promoting violence. But we remain concerned that some Governments use efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism as a means to stifle the exercise of the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, and other civil and political rights. Such actions may run counter to their human rights commitments, may be inconsistent with international legal obligations, are counterproductive because they reduce citizens’ trust in their Governments, and may even lead to increased support for violent extremists. Ultimately, citizens who are able to express their views and pursue political change through democratic means are less likely to resort to violence.

Finally, we look forward to working with Member States to do our part to support the growing movement

to counter violent extremism. We look forward to the Secretary-General’s action plan on preventing violent extremism, which we expect to advance the movement to counter violent extremism and to support the many regional and local initiatives under way that seek to save our youth and communities from violent extremists.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

Several delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind Member States that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Dibaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to you, Sir, the Secretariat and all delegations for their widespread support for resolution 70/109, which has just been adopted.

Allow me to say a few words about the statement made by the representative of the Israeli regime. As usual, he levelled accusations and allegations against my country that are all baseless and nothing but a bunch of lies. The anger and fury of that regime against the resolution, which is aimed at combating extremism and violence, is quite understandable and was reflected in the hate speech that he read out today. It is quite understandable that a regime that has created an apartheid system in the territories it controls cannot tolerate efforts to promote moderation, tolerance and respect for the rights of peoples and human rights. In that sense, the Israeli delegation has deemed the resolution to be against itself.

The speaker represents a regime that has occupied the lands of other nations for many decades and places people in the occupied lands under harsh policies and practices, and under siege — practices which have been condemned time and again by the international community. That regime practices one of the most extremist policies ever contemplated and put in place by a ruling entity in the contemporary world, shamelessly flouting and violating every norm and principle of international law and the civilized world. We are — and, it is safe to say, all of humankind is — against the policy of putting peoples under occupation and siege and of denying them their basic rights and necessities, as the Israelis do to the people living in the occupied territory, including Gaza.

In that respect, there is no doubt that the occupation, suffering and humiliation that the Palestinian people have endured for so long, and the atrocities that the Israelis have committed against them in so many cases, including the latest against Gaza, are a major source of anger and bitterness that extremists have always tried to exploit in order to advance their evil agenda. And yes, we are against occupation because we consider it to be, inter alia, one of the main sources that feed violent extremism. The Islamic Republic of Iran has done all in its power to fight and support the fight against violent extremism, and encourage moderation in the region surrounding Iran.

Mr. Awad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to respond to the remarks made by the representative of the Israeli regime with regard to Iran's cooperation with Syria.

It was surprising to hear the representative of Israel, in his first statement today, speak about humanity and his country's obligation to help people in Nepal and Haiti, and weep in sympathy for our brothers in Somalia and South Sudan. We saw the representative saddened and chagrined by the lack of drinking water and schools in Syria, and yet we all know of Israel's

practices against our Palestinian and Syrian brothers in the occupied Syrian Golan.

The Israeli occupation is the main reason for human suffering in the region and for extremism and terrorism in the world. We have heard all delegations talk about helping to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people caused by the practices of the Israeli regime. The representative of Israel should implement the legitimate recommendations of the Security Council and the General Assembly urging it to end its occupation of the occupied Arab territories, including the Golan.

As we mentioned in our statement earlier, Israel's cooperation with terrorist groups in Syria is an absolute fact that has been confirmed by United Nations commissions of inquiry. We simply transmitted the information set out in United Nations reports to the effect that there has been cooperation between the Israeli regime and terrorist groups. As a consequence, we are seeing the Israeli regime opposing our proposal and that of our allies.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 16.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.