



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

**73<sup>rd</sup>** plenary meeting

Tuesday, 02 April 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

*President:* Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

*In the absence of the President, Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.79.

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

## Agenda item 140 (continued)

### Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/73/722/Add.3)

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/73/722/Add.3, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/73/722/Add.2, Gabon has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/73/722/Add.3?

*It was so decided.*

## Agenda item 72 (continued)

### Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

#### Draft resolution (A/73/L.79)

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu,

**Mr. Çavuşoğlu** (Turkey) (*spoke in Turkish; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): We have all come together today in a Hall that was originally founded to house the council of human conscience. We are here today to stand together against the threats that we currently face. We have come together today to protect our fundamental value, the sanctity of life. Unfortunately, this shared fundamental value is under a clear threat from terrorism and terrorist acts. Delegations are no doubt aware that in a clearly planned terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, 51 Muslims were killed while they were praying. We have come to this Hall today to condemn that inhuman, anti-Islamic attack and to show solidarity.

Today we are standing up against terrorists to send the following message — the spiral of hate, fear and violence that they are trying to foment is going to destroy them, and they will neither succeed. In the General Assembly Hall today, we have delegations from different beliefs, nations, geographical locations and backgrounds coming together to voice a shared commitment. This is perhaps the best and most meaningful answer possible to terrorists' relentless attacks.

On behalf of the Turkish nation and on my own behalf, I would like to extend our most sincere condolences to the victims of the Christchurch attacks, as well as to the people and the Government of New Zealand. As proof of Turkish solidarity, I was recently sent by our President, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to visit

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19-09541 (E)



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New Zealand and personally present our condolences. While there, we saw how firmly and proudly the people of New Zealand embraced the Muslim community of their country, under the leadership of their Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern.

Undoubtedly, Member States know very well that Turkey has been fighting terrorism in a very determined manner at the international level and also within its borders. We have been fighting, inter alia, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Kurdistan Workers' Party, the Democratic Union Party, the People's Protection Units, the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front and the Fetullah Terrorist Organization. It is worth noting that we have been fighting all those terrorist organizations not just with determination but all at the same time.

Because it is one of our highest priorities to contribute to the joint global effort aimed at defeating terrorism, under our presidency of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) we recently organized, on 22 March in Istanbul, an Open-ended Emergency Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee. In the joint declaration following that meeting, we affirmed that no act of terrorism can be excused, regardless of who organizes it or what its targets are. Indeed, no such act should be excused.

Through the tragedy of the Christchurch attacks, we have all seen that the interrelated issues of intolerance, racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia are actually an even bigger threat than what we might have thought previously. Indeed, as Islamophobia and racism go hand in hand, we cannot overlook violence of any kind, including Islamophobic attitudes. It is time that the international community understand this fact. We must respond with a common voice against these violent acts and attitudes.

Accordingly, we have all come together today — believers of all kinds, from a wide array of communities — to mobilize globally and prove that we are all part of one human family. We should make our coming together stand for the idea that we will not support any voice that expresses any form of anti-Semitic, anti-Christian or Islamophobic belief. If any of us fear for our safety, then none of us are safe. We must therefore make a joint effort and commit ourselves collectively. That is the only way to combat those threats.

Throughout the world, we see distorted historical narratives and toxic conspiracy theories that fuel those events. We must remember that there are reckless politicians who equate Islam with terrorism, and even members of the media who support those opinions and contribute to that situation.

It would be very unjust and biased to equate Islam with those acts of terrorism. Therefore, I would like to once again reject and condemn that approach. We should all reject the use of words such as "Islamic terrorism", "Christian terrorism" and "Buddhist terrorism". Terrorism does not have a religion, language, race or nation. It is a crime against humanity. Politicians and the media must adopt a common approach and stance to terrorism. As we increasingly face an atmosphere of injustice, prejudice and discrimination, it is time to take the necessary measures. We have to counter those tensions, which are poisoning our societies and creating violence.

We must first enforce our existing legislation, but also develop new legislation. We must mobilize all segments of society. That includes different types of media, from digital to print. We have to make sure that people who encourage or carry out terrorist activities are held accountable. It is therefore vital for us to monitor and report those events. That is our responsibility.

We are facing a period of uncertainty and transition. Conflicts are becoming more complicated. We now see that peace at home and peace in the world are related. We should never be indifferent to those common threats. The worst response that the General Assembly could have at the moment would be to remain indifferent to those events. That is why we have come together today to discuss combating terrorism and other acts of violence based on religion or belief. We want to convey the following messages.

First, any form of discrimination or terrorism is a global threat. We must have a very clear understanding of justice. We condemn anti-Semitism in the same way we condemn Islamophobia or anti-Christianity. Those are all crimes and we condemn all types of discrimination equally. However, we are also committing ourselves to eliminating all kinds of discrimination and acts of terrorism. We believe that this will be an important turning point and will serve as a road map for all countries.

The General Assembly very recently took an important step to put an end to those threats and protect

the sanctity of places of worship. In that regard, I would like to thank the Assembly once again. We are one of the founders of that important initiative and we know how important it is. I would like to once again thank President Espinosa Garcés and Permanent Representative Al-Thani, who are today supporting that initiative.

I would like to reiterate that we should all stand together against intolerance, violence, hatred, racism and terrorism. I would like to conclude my statement with the words of Rumi, who has had an important influence on the history of the world. Rumi, 800 years ago in Anatolia, said,

“Listen with ears of tolerance! See through the eyes of compassion! Speak with the language of love.”

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/73/L.79.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Hawke** (New Zealand): New Zealand is pleased to support draft resolution A/73/L.79, as we join with all here today in condemning violence, terrorism and extremism in all their forms, including where it targets individuals on the basis of or in the name of religion or belief.

New Zealand expresses its appreciation to Turkey and to the core sponsors of that initiative. We welcome the draft resolution's focus on the need to combat intolerance and discrimination, including its call for strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue on the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace, based on human rights and for the diversity of religions and beliefs.

New Zealand is humbled by the outpouring of sympathy and solidarity from the international community since 15 March. We are particularly grateful to the global Muslim community, which has stood with us during these dark days.

New Zealand was forever changed on 15 March 2019. It was a day when a coward attempted to terrorize and tear New Zealand apart; a day when 50 innocent New Zealand Muslims were murdered and another 50 wounded in a brutal terrorist attack in their

places of worship, the Al Noor and Linwood Mosques in Christchurch.

While everything else may have changed in our country on 15 March, New Zealand's essential character has not and will not. New Zealand is and will remain a safe and open society, a place where our international visitors feel comfortable and secure. We are a compassionate, tolerant people.

The coward who committed that attack was not from New Zealand, but as a nation we know that we are not immune from the viruses of hate and fear that create a place where violence can flourish.

There are many questions that we are asking, and that need to be answered. And they will be. Our priority has been to ensure that the needs of the victims and their families are being met. We are also taking action to help do everything we can to stop such a senseless attack in future.

First, new, stronger gun control laws have been announced. All semi-automatic weapons used during the terrorist attack on 15 March will be banned.

Secondly, a Royal commission of inquiry will look at what could or should have been done to prevent the attack.

Thirdly, it is illegal in New Zealand to distribute or possess the attacker's manifesto or video of the attack. We will not give voice to his message of hate, and we ask all others to do the same.

Finally, the Government is addressing the role that social-media platforms played in the events and is identifying steps we can take, including on the international stage, with our partners.

In this Hall, conversations about religion and belief and combating intolerance, discrimination and hatred have divided us all too often. We must not allow acts of terror, including the attack in Christchurch, to fuel these divisions. These are issues that we must confront together, united by our common humanity and determined to stamp out all hate-filled ideologies.

As our Prime Minister has said, the world has been stuck in a vicious cycle of extremism breeding extremism, and it must end. Condemnations of violence and terrorism must now turn to a collective response. We all have a part to play. New Zealand is committed to turning our despair into meaningful action.

As New Zealand emerges from mourning, one thing is resoundingly clear — this act of hatred and terror has not achieved its objective to divide us as a nation. Instead, the people of New Zealand have come together, cried together, prayed together and asked questions together. We have expressed our deep national grief and demonstrated our *aroha*, or love, for our Muslim family.

This tragedy has united us. Our hope is that it will do the same internationally and that it will serve to demonstrate the power of compassion, kindness, tolerance and community to overcome the evil of division and hate. These are the values that represent the very best of us.

**Mr. Blanchard** (Canada): I would like to thank Turkey for bringing forward this important draft resolution (A/73/L.79). I would also like to thank Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu for his presence in the Hall today and his personal introduction of the draft resolution.

Terrorism in all its forms is something that we must condemn. This is no less true when it comes in the form of white supremacy and Islamophobia, as was the case on 15 March, when a gunman murdered 50 men, women and children who had gathered for prayer in their place of worship — a place where, more than anywhere, they should have been safe. The pain of that attack hit home for many Canadians, who recall all too well the similar attack that occurred just two years ago when six people were killed in a Quebec City mosque. When violence like this occurs — whether in mosques, churches, synagogues or on the streets of our major cities — we must not be afraid to specifically condemn it for what it is: neo-Nazism, white supremacy, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, terrorism.

As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in Canada's House of Commons following the Christchurch attack,

“When we fail to denounce hatred with total conviction, we empower those people and legitimize their violence.”

He went on to call on all like-minded countries of the world to stand together in this fight.

I would like to reiterate, on behalf of Canada and Canadians, our support and compassion for the people of New Zealand. As fellow members of the Commonwealth, Canada and New Zealand have a close and historic relationship. As our Minister for Foreign Affairs said recently in the Security Council: “We are more than friends; we are family” (*S/PV.8496*, p. 53). In

particular, I would like to salute the moral leadership of Jacinda Arden, who has distinguished herself not only to the people of New Zealand but to the whole world. We stand with New Zealand in the face of this terrible tragedy and with it in the fight against racism and intolerance in all its forms.

Finally, as Prime Minister Trudeau said in the House of Commons,

“... we as a global society have a choice to make. Will we call out our leaders who turn a blind eye to those who incite violence? Will we call out our co-workers who tell racist or misogynistic jokes, unchallenged? Will we call out the online trolls — those cowards who spew hatred, launching their vitriol behind a shield of anonymity? Ultimately, ... will we do the right thing? Or will we bury our heads in the sand now, only to bury them in our hands later?”

“The tragedy in New Zealand is, sadly, yet another example of just how far we have gone astray. But we cannot let the lessons of those 50 deaths go unlearned. The path that we are going down is dangerous and unsustainable. People are tired of fighting this alone, without the full backing of their leaders.

“But we can take a stand, here and now, in Canada and around the world, and say that enough is enough, that the days of spewing hatred and inciting violence without consequences are over. We owe it to the people of Christchurch. We owe it to the people of [Quebec City], and of Pittsburgh, and of Manchester ... [W]e owe it to our kids, and we owe it to ourselves.”

Canada wholeheartedly supports the draft resolution.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position before taking a decision on the draft resolution.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.79 entitled “Combating terrorism and other acts of violence based on religion or belief”.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Ms. De Miranda** (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 also become sponsors of draft resolution A/73/L.79: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Maldives, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Spain, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe, and the State of Palestine. I would like also to announce that Japan is not a sponsor of A/73/L.79.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.79?

*Draft resolution A/73/L.79 was adopted (resolution 73/285).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now give the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position following the adoption of the resolution. May I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Ms. Bird** (Australia): Australia is pleased to support resolution 73/285. Australians express their deepest sympathies for those affected by the devastating terrorist attack in Christchurch and share the grief of Muslim communities all over the world. As our Prime Minister has said, Australia condemns in absolute terms the abhorrent attack of 15 March 2019.

We stand together with New Zealand and all countries that condemn the hatred and intolerance behind this extremist attack. Australia condemns in the strongest terms acts of terrorism as well as the racism, xenophobia and intolerance that fuels them. We condemn all forms of violent extremism and its manifestations, including far-right violent extremism. We will always defend and protect the right of all Australians to practice their religion peacefully and without fear.

Australia is a successful immigrant nation based on a harmonious multicultural society. Almost half of our current population was either born overseas or has at least one parent born overseas, from every nation, culture and faith. While peaceful protest is a fundamental right, the Australian Government does not

and will not tolerate anyone who incites violence and hatred within our community.

Australia supports the call for strengthened international efforts to promote a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels, based on respect for human rights, freedom of religious worship and for the diversity of religions and beliefs. Australia welcomes the call for all States to work together to protect individuals against acts of violence, discrimination and hate crimes based on religion, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We must continue to build cohesive societies that are resilient to messages of extremism.

Terrorism remains a global challenge that requires a sustained and strengthened global response from all members of the international community in partnership. Australia stands strengthened in its resolve to work together to promote tolerance and openness following the terrorist attack in Christchurch.

**Mr. Cohen** (United States of America): I am honoured to join the General Assembly today at the adoption of resolution 73/285, on combating terrorism and other acts of violence based on religion or belief. We offer our thanks to Turkey for taking the initiative to bring us together for this timely and important discussion.

Before I begin, we offer our condolences to the people and the Government of New Zealand in the wake of the horrific terrorist attacks on the Muslim community in Christchurch last month. We stand in solidarity with the people of New Zealand and their Government against this act of hate. As Secretary of State Pompeo said, no one should have to fear such violence in their place of worship. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the victims of the attack and their families.

The mosque attacks in Christchurch were a powerful reminder to all of us that terrorism knows no bounds and holds no one ideology, and that no part of the world is immune from its unacceptable and repugnant expression of hate. Many of us in this Hall represent nations whose people have been victims of terrorist attacks. Americans know all too well the pain of such attacks, most recently with the attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. The Yazidis and Christians victimized by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant also know this pain. Opposing terrorism unites countries around the world.

While we have made progress in our fight against terrorism, we must remain vigilant. Together we must continue to fight terrorism in all its forms, wherever it exists. Organized terrorist groups are coordinating and conducting attacks around the world. In that context, keeping people safe from terrorism requires a coordinated, whole-of-society strategy that includes defeating violent ideologies, preventing terrorist radicalization and, when possible, rehabilitating those who have been committed to violent extremism.

Governments cannot do this alone. Civil society and the private sector must also be part of the solution. The United States Government is committed to preventing and countering violent extremism. The White House recently released the National Strategy for Counter-terrorism, which stresses the importance of public communications and diplomacy to strengthen partnerships and civil society.

Creating successful prevention and deradicalization architecture requires putting in place policies and programmes to confront the influence of radical terrorist ideologies, which means building local resilience to ideologies that are discriminatory, exclusionary or intolerant through inclusive, rights-respecting governance and education that develops critical thinking and respect for the religious and cultural practices of others. In addition, it means promoting credible voices that have the authority and legitimacy to discredit those of terrorists and radicalizers.

This is not easy work. We face a complex, diffuse and formidable global threat. But with partnerships, international cooperation, hard work and commitment, we can and we must achieve sustained victory in our shared fight against terrorism.

**Mr. Halvorsen** (Norway): We offer our sincere condolences to the people of New Zealand. Our thoughts and heartfelt sympathies are with the families and friends of all those killed, injured or otherwise affected by the horrific attacks carried out in Christchurch. For us, the attacks are a powerful reminder of the importance of working against all forms of violent extremism, including right-wing extremism.

A major focus for Norway is preventing violent extremism in all its forms. The underlying drivers remain present and are perhaps even more visible today. We must maintain the momentum on preventing right-wing extremism as well. It must be our top priority.

Women, youth and local communities also play crucial roles. We need a whole-of-society approach.

**Mrs. Furman** (Israel): I would like to express our condolences to the people and the Government of New Zealand and to the families of the victims of the terror attack against Muslim worshippers in Christchurch. We strongly condemn that horrifying act of terrorism.

Israel joined the consensus on the resolution adopted today (resolution 73/285), as the spirit of the resolution and the topic it addresses reflect the core values of the United Nations. It is critical that the General Assembly send a strong message against religion-based hatred and hate crimes, but we must do it in such a way that unites us all.

Unfortunately, like many others, we felt that the negotiation process on the draft resolution could have been more inclusive and transparent. As a result, we could not sponsor the resolution, despite the importance we all attach to the need to combat terrorism and other acts of violence based on religion or belief. The United Nations was created in the wake of the most heinous atrocity ever to be committed against a religious group. The Organization's founders vowed never to stand idly by as religion-based hatred reared its ugly head.

Having been persecuted for centuries because of our religion, and witnessing the rise of anti-Semitism once again, we condemn in the strongest terms any act of violence against persons on the basis of their religion. And we are proud to sponsor the annual United Nations draft resolution on freedom of religion or belief.

Taking a robust stand against religion-based violence and terrorism is our primary duty. We should all commit to working together to eliminate it.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

**Mr. Whitely** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its member States would first like to extend their condolences to the victims and their families, and the Government and people of New

Zealand. We condemn in the strongest terms the attack that targeted the Friday prayers, a sacred moment for Muslim believers. As EU High Representative Federica Mogherini has stated:

“We stand in full solidarity with the people and authorities of New Zealand. Attacks on places of worship are attacks on all of us who value diversity and freedom of religion and expression.”

It is in that spirit of solidarity that we gather together here today to make plain our opposition to those who sow hatred against those practicing their religion or beliefs and our determination to do more to make sure that such hatred no longer finds its articulation in terrible acts of terrorism.

As the main sponsor of the annual resolution on freedom of religion or belief in New York and Geneva, the EU has consistently striven to ensure that these important freedoms are recognized and protected by the international community. To recall the EU's words when introducing the draft resolution last year, promoting and protecting the freedom of religion or belief as a universal human right and eliminating all forms of discrimination, including those on the basis of religion or belief, are key priorities of the European Union's human rights policy.

The resolution underscores the deep concern felt by the international community at rising discrimination, violence and intolerance directed against religious communities. The EU has also sought to bring a focus to bear on the major challenges faced by persons belonging to faith communities or minorities across the world, including in Europe.

We extend our thanks to the main sponsors of resolution 73/285, adopted today, for their efforts to accommodate some of the proposals that we put forward. Sensitive issues do require careful, transparent and inclusive consideration, and the process of deliberations on the draft resolution was somewhat compressed. It is also important to recall that when atrocities occur — which they do with heart-rending frequency — it is not always possible for the United Nations to articulate its collective shock and outrage through a resolution. That should never be read as a signal that the international community is turning its face away from those who have suffered.

Resolution 73/285 is a reminder that we should strengthen our efforts to tackle the global challenges

of violent extremism and hatred as well as to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait.

**Sheikh Al Sabah** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we thank the President for organizing this meeting to consider and adopt resolution 73/285, condemning the heinous terrorist attack on the Al Noor and Linwood mosques in New Zealand, which killed 51 worshippers. This meeting sends a message of solidarity and sympathy to the families of the martyrs and the wounded, as well as to all the friendly people of New Zealand, following that abhorrent act.

I would also like to highly commend the efforts of the Government of New Zealand and the measures that it has taken to show unprecedented tolerance and manage this disastrous tragedy in a civilized manner, which has clearly alleviated the suffering of the families of the victims. I would also like to thank Turkey, a friendly country, for taking the initiative to introduce the resolution. My country was honoured to co-sponsor the resolution and expresses its full support for it.

The phenomenon of Islamophobia, or what is known as fear of Islam, hate speech, discrimination and violence are among the most dangerous scourges that threaten peaceful societies. On many occasions, numerous countries have warned against the spread of these scourges and the need to address them in order to achieve peace, security and harmony among the nations of the world. Unfortunately, these phenomena have recently been exacerbated, as evidenced by the recurrent terrorist attacks in various capitals of developed and developing countries alike. The suffering is all the greater when nationalism reigns and calls for policies and laws that only serve to aggravate such dangerous phenomena as xenophobia, leading to the further marginalization of and discrimination against minorities.

The Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant international conventions and treaties all call for the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination based on race, gender, language or religion. All resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Human Rights

Council in that regard affirm these principles and call for them to be respected and strengthened.

The State of Kuwait is keen to reject terrorism and extremism. Indeed, following this terrorist attack, we, as a member of the Security Council and in collaboration with Indonesia, a friendly country, drafted a Security Council press statement, dated 15 March (SC/13740), condemning this criminal act and calling for such extremist terrorist practices to be suppressed. It also called for the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these heinous terrorist acts to be brought to account, and urged all States to cooperate with the Government of New Zealand in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions.

We further recall that, on 25 March, the General Assembly celebrated the International Day for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination (see A/73/PV.71). This celebration is a means to strengthen international solidarity in the face of the dangerous scourges of terrorism and racism, which have fragmented societies and peoples and undermined international security and peace in many regions and countries of the world.

It is the primary responsibility of the States Members of the United Nations to promote and protect human rights, including the right of those who belong to religious or ethnic minorities to freely practice their religion. Countries must also develop strategies, mechanisms and measures at all levels — local, national, regional and international — to raise awareness and strengthen the principle of peaceful coexistence among all peoples. Member States, international and regional organizations, human rights organizations, non-governmental organizations, religious entities, the media and civil society organizations all have a moral responsibility to promote the culture of tolerance, peace, respect for human rights, religious pluralism and the fight against incitement to hatred, violence and stigmatization. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of resolution 73/285 in order to enhance solidarity and consolidate efforts aimed at combating the scourges of extremism and terrorism in all their forms and manifestations, as well as to strengthen dialogue, moderation and the rejection of religious extremism and fundamentalism.

Terrorism should not be linked to a religion, nationality, civilization or racial group, as some extremist groups knowingly do. Islam is a religion

of peace whose noble values include tolerance, coexistence, moderation and the rejection of extremism and violence.

In conclusion, I extend my sincere condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack in New Zealand. May God Almighty rest their souls in peace and grant their families patience and solace, and the wounded quick recovery.

**Mr. Al-Maawda (Qatar)** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for organizing this meeting on the important issue under consideration today. We are proud that the State of Qatar, along with other friendly delegations, contributed to the tireless efforts to hold this meeting. We were among the first countries to sponsor the draft resolution entitled “Combating terrorism and other acts of violence based on religion or belief”, which was adopted today as resolution 73/285. We would like to thank Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, for introducing the resolution on behalf of its sponsors.

Peace is an objective sought by all human societies in every time and place. It is the word used as a greeting by the Muslims who were praying last month at the two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, where the perpetrator committed his odious terrorist act. All sites of worship are inviolable because they have special sanctity and are symbols of peace, tolerance and love for the other. We meet in the General Assembly today to discuss the grave violations of that sanctity, which everyone should protect for the safety of worshippers and their places of worship.

The values reiterated during this meeting — respect for the rights and freedoms of all, regardless of their religion, race, language or gender — are basic values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, international law and conventions, as well as numerous resolutions adopted by various United Nations bodies. The international community is unanimous in refuting terrorism, whatever its forms, manifestations, reasons or causes.

The major motivation for terrorism today is religious hatred, including Islamophobia and other forms of hatred and fanaticism. All States and organizations, in addition to condemning this heinous growing phenomenon in the strongest terms, must cooperate to address its deep-rooted causes and take significant measures in all areas and at all levels to prevent the recurrence of such acts in the future. That is why

today's resolution firmly condemns the attacks against the worshippers in the two mosques in Christchurch and calls for practical measures to be taken to protect innocent people against such terrorist acts.

We strongly condemn all terrorist acts, including those motivated by religious hatred. We once again extend our condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack in New Zealand and express our solidarity with the Government and the people of friendly New Zealand, who have significantly demonstrated solidarity, compassion and love and have shown great skill and professionalism in managing this crisis.

The terrorist attack in Christchurch, along with other terrorist attacks, have taught us the danger of hate speech and of attempts to demonize the worshippers of a religion or people who belong to a particular race, nationality or minority, including attempts to abuse Islam and harm Muslims. We must firmly put an end to the discourse that gives rise to hatred, regardless of its source, but especially that of certain Government officials for political reasons, because such discourse threatens the peace and security of our region and of the entire world.

The State of Qatar has repeatedly emphasized that terrorism has no religion, race or national identity. We are aware of the danger of stereotypes when it comes to terrorism and violent extremism. We cannot ascribe certain characteristics to an entire people or group of religious worshippers just because some of the religion's adherents have committed heinous crimes against humanity. That would be an unjust violation of the rights of millions of people and would amount to religious and racial discrimination. That can lead only to a climate of fanaticism and hatred of others, which in turn would lead to catastrophic results and more crimes and perpetuate and widen the vicious cycle of violence. We cannot accuse an entire religion or an entire ethnic group of terrorism, because that runs counter to real efforts to address this phenomenon and to know its true causes.

In conclusion, the important resolution adopted today must lead to future efforts to prevent terrorist acts against religious sites based on religious hatred. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's appeal addressed to the Alliance of Civilizations to communicate with Governments, religious organizations and leaders to determine what measures

might prevent such attacks against places of worship and ensure their inviolability.

**Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank all the countries that participated in the initiative to adopt a resolution to combat terrorist crimes and other acts of violence based on religion or belief. Resolution 73/285 firmly condemns the heinous and despicable terrorist act that left innocent martyrs and has shaken the global conscience, namely, the crime of killing innocent Muslim worshippers in two mosques in New Zealand.

Despite the suffering we feel in the face of such a hateful crime, we welcome the fact that the Government and the people of New Zealand have shown love, compassion and solidarity. They have gained our respect. We would also like to commend Muslims in New Zealand, who echoed those sentiments and underscored the tolerance of Islam.

Hatred, racism and extremism do not belong only to the past; they are timeless, recurring phenomena that arise whenever there are reasons for their resurgence. Observers of the activities of extremist terrorist groups on social media note that those groups have successfully expanded in cyberspace, where they have established platforms for recruiting their members. One need only observe the extent to which such groups have expanded. Unreported in newspapers and media, hundreds of social media accounts are being opened every day by supporters of terrorist groups, while thousands of images are posted online concerning imaginary battles and victories. Despite all of the efforts to marginalize those individuals, their accounts on social networks only gain in strength.

Fighting the discourse of extremism and ideologies that fuel terrorism and violence is one of the most urgent and important international priorities, as well as among our top priorities. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has addressed the phenomenon of extremism and terrorism at the local, regional and international levels. We have attempted to identify the deep-rooted causes that led to the proliferation of violent and ideological extremism. As part of that effort, we have set up a strategy for intellectual security, based on three pillars: prevention, rehabilitation and sponsorship. We have sought to deepen international cooperation, and created a United Nations centre to combat terrorism.

All social media platforms and sites should endeavour to combat hate speech and its proliferation,

be it through texts, images or videos. Those that publish them online should be brought to justice, and cyberspace should not be a haven for extremists and fanatics. The freedom of expression should first and foremost respect individuals and all their differences.

If we want to defeat terrorism, we should all believe that any terrorist threat against any country is a threat against all our countries. We must look beyond our narrow individual interests and consider the interests and security of other countries. We must recognize that terrorism does not belong to any race, religion or ethnicity; it is a manifestation of hatred and rejection of the other.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has co-sponsored today's resolution 73/285 because we firmly believe in its contents and timeliness. Its adoption comes following the terrible crime that shocked New Zealand and the world. Once again, we commend the people of New Zealand for their friendly sentiments. We wish the martyrs compassion and the wounded a speedy recovery.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia.

**Mrs. Marsudi** (Indonesia): Our meeting today is very timely. It shows our solidarity with the people of New Zealand and other countries affected by terrorist attacks. The attack on Muslims while they were conducting Friday prayers was heinous and cowardly. The Government and the people of Indonesia strongly condemn it.

Indeed, Indonesians were among the victims. Nevertheless, it attacks our sense of humanity. Immediately acting with a sense of solidarity, Indonesia, together with Kuwait, drafted a Security Council press statement (SC/13740) condemning the attack. Today's consensus, reached by a broad margin of the United Nations membership, demonstrates our resolve on this important cause. Having supported resolution 73/285, let me highlight three points.

First, no country is immune from racism, bigotry or hatred. The attack happened because of one man's refusal to understand that Islam is a religion of peace. Unfortunately, this was not an isolated case of a terrorist attack triggered by hatred. To solve the problem, we must recognize that this as a global phenomenon. We should act in unity while learning from and working with each other. As the country with the largest Muslim

population, tolerance has been part of our culture for centuries. People of different faiths and traditions have coexisted peacefully, celebrating — instead of rejecting — diversity. We are not perfect, but no country is. Let us learn from one another so that we can prevent the clash of civilizations from becoming reality, because the most important of all civilizations is our human civilization.

Secondly, political leadership is crucial in building tolerance. The culture of peace and tolerance should not be taken for granted. It needs to be cultivated and nurtured. It requires time and the involvement of society as a whole. It needs rules and regulations. And, most important, political leadership is key. All political leaders must move away from divisive narratives and instead work towards unity for the greater good. The response by the Prime Minister and the people of New Zealand, who came forward to support humankind, is truly exemplary.

Thirdly, concrete cooperative actions are needed to prevent similar terrorist attacks from happening again. We must continue to work together in fostering global dialogue that promotes tolerance and peace. That includes initiatives such as dialogues among faiths or civilizations. During the recent emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Istanbul, the Foreign Ministers requested its Contact Group on Peace and Dialogue to take action to address this problem. Our work in the United Nations should therefore also consist of more action. The effective implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is essential, especially in addressing conditions conducive to terrorism worldwide. That includes addressing continuously evolving methods of terrorism, such as terrorist acts by lone wolves, which are at least as dangerous as those carried out by terrorist organizations.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the importance of taking action on this resolution.

**Ms. Bahous** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking the Republic of Turkey and all other States that co-sponsored the important resolution 73/285, entitled "Combating terrorism and other acts of violence based on religion or belief".

On this occasion, let me express the sincere condolences of Jordan to the Government and the people of New Zealand, as well as to the families of the martyrs, including Jordanians, who fell victims

of the monstrous attack in Christchurch last month. We strongly condemn the attack, which has shaken the global consciousness because it targeted peaceful, innocent worshippers kneeling before God. They fell victim to a toxic narrative about Islam, which is a religion of mercy, tolerance and peace. Without a doubt, what we are witnessing today with the use of the discourse of hatred and the rejection of the other is a serious threat to global peace and stability everywhere.

However, in Jordan we strongly believe that the spiritual values that unite us — tolerance, mercy, love, empathy and mutual respect — are the basis of every religion. They unite us today and every day, and increase our resolve and strength to stand together against terrorism, violent extremism and hate crimes. Allow me to quote His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al-Hussein:

“Whether we bow in a mosque, kneel in a church, pray in a temple or simply engage in a selfless act of kindness, we all are joined in faith and commitment to humankind’s highest good.”

Today’s resolution addresses the discourse of hatred and intolerance against religions and faiths as a serious threat to coexistence. However, we are extremely concerned about the incitement to and stoking of hatred and the increasing use of extremist discourse against Islam and Muslims through the exploitation of social media, which is sometimes used under the pretext of the freedom of expression. This matter requires us all to address its root causes. Violence will lead only to violence; hatred will lead only to hatred. We must continue to seriously engage in dialogue and promote coexistence among the followers of different religions, and achieve harmony, understanding and mutual respect among peoples.

All the necessary measures should be taken to regulate social media, which has become a pathway for promoting extremism and deluding young people. We must also hold accountable the perpetrators, planners and sponsors of terrorist acts.

In order to address the narrative of hate, we reaffirm the critical role of young people in combating terrorism, violence and extremism. We must therefore empower youth through awareness-raising and high-quality education based on respect for the faith of the other and the principles of coexistence. We must also guarantee a dignified life for young people and ensure their effective participation in implementing the

youth, peace and security agenda, as well as relevant international resolutions.

I reiterate Jordan’s commitment to supporting the efforts of the Secretary-General and Member States to counter terrorism and violent extremism, and to fully mobilize the United Nations and its relevant organs to promote a culture of peace and coexistence, combat hate speech and take the measures necessary to prevent attacks against religious sites so as to preserve their sanctity.

Religions are united under the principles ordained by God — the love of God and the love of the neighbour. That is our shared path to defeating all forms of terrorism, extremism and violence. Let us work together as brothers and sisters, equal in human dignity and united in our pursuit of peace and security, regardless of our race, religion or belief.

**Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan):** At the outset, let me join others in expressing my country’s strongest condemnation of the horrendous Islamophobic terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch on 15 March, in which 50 precious lives were lost. Nine of those who were martyred in the mosques were from my country, Pakistan. One of them, Naeem Rasheed, was a dedicated teacher who heroically tried to stop the terrorist to protect the lives of others. But he was unable to save the life of his own son, who perished in the attack.

He was not alone; there are many other stories of similar heroism and courage. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims and survivors of this cowardly terrorist attack. We also express our solidarity with the people and the Government of New Zealand, and salute the Prime Minister of that country for her exemplary leadership in the face of this tragedy.

As one of the sponsors of resolution 73/285, we welcome Turkey’s leadership and initiative, which is both apt and timely.

The Christchurch terrorist attack cannot be seen in isolation. It was only the latest manifestation of a growing phenomenon — one rooted in hate, bigotry, racism and the extremist ideology of racial and white supremacy. The rise of extreme nationalist and populist ideologies in liberal Western democracies and elsewhere, including in our region, is fanning the flames of bigotry, intolerance, anti-Muslim hatred and xenophobia. Tellingly, the growing prejudice against Islam is becoming increasingly commonplace. It is

evident in policies aimed at creating walls and barriers against displaced populations, as much as in attempts to denigrate Islamic beliefs and our holy figures on the pretext of freedom of expression. Pervasive Islamophobia is a global phenomenon and calls for a global response of collaborative, coherent and committed action against incidents that fuel, funnel and fortify this narrative against Islam and Muslims.

The political falsehood of equating people of different religions with violent extremism in order to garner political support for the forces of hate lies at the heart of this phenomenon. We know only too well that the profiling of an entire people or community can have catastrophic consequences, and that stigmatization can produce equally dangerous consequences for social stability and social peace. The freedom of expression has often been used as an excuse to enable vile expressions to prosper and for hate speech to be mainstreamed.

The Christchurch tragedy has also shed disturbing light on the role of social media, which is increasingly being regarded as one of the most radicalizing instruments of our era. It is time that we evolve ways to ensure that social media companies are held accountable for content that incites violence or spreads hatred. They should ensure that their platforms are not exploited by terrorists or used for the dissemination of harmful or hate-filled messages.

As a contemporary form of racism, Islamophobia poses a grave threat to global peace and security. We must unite against those who seek to divide us by inciting violence, by stereotyping people on the grounds of belief and by using hate speech and defaming religions. We must strengthen efforts to foster global dialogue on the promotion of a culture of tolerance, dialogue and peace at all levels. That dialogue must be based on respect for human rights and diversity and give space for diverse voices, religions, world views and faith traditions.

The adoption of today's resolution is a strong manifestation of our shared commitment to standing united against racial and religious hatred. My country is committed to continuing our efforts to build bridges of understanding and to challenge and resist those who seek to construct walls of bigotry and hatred. We look towards those who believe in humankind's common future to help evolve consensus for action in order to combat the forces of Islamophobia, xenophobia and racism.

**Mr. Ahmad Tajuddin** (Malaysia): Please allow me to extend my delegation's utmost gratitude and appreciation to the President for convening today's meeting.

Malaysia joined Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan, Qatar and Kuwait in initiating resolution 73/285, which the General Assembly adopted today. We thank all Member States for their valuable support and co-sponsorship.

The adoption of this resolution shows that all of us are united in combating acts of terror and violence based on religion or belief. Such heinous crimes do not have a place in this interdependent world; they must be rejected as a whole. Looking back at the Christchurch tragedy just over two weeks ago, it is no secret that the attacks were perpetrated due to rising nationalist sentiments and extreme supremacist ideologies.

Malaysia strongly believes that the lack of knowledge about other racial and religious communities has undeniably contributed to growing hatred and animosity. We can embrace our differences when we learn to accept and appreciate the diversity, distinctiveness and uniqueness of others. It is therefore important for us to curb hate speech and curtail the spread of extreme ideologies, particularly through social media, as such sentiments could easily influence the general public, which may not have an opportunity to learn about other racial, cultural or religious communities. Such sentiments are undoubtedly dangerous, as they would make those who are prone to radicalization become more susceptible to the ideology of extremist groups bent on inciting hatred and provoking violence.

In that context, Malaysia lauds the efforts of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in facilitating the universal discussion on living together in diversity, preventing intercultural crises and mobilizing broad public support for cultural diversity, tolerance and inclusion to prevent attacks against and guarantee the sanctity of religious sites. Malaysia also calls on all Members of the United Nations to seriously promote intercultural and interfaith dialogue, which undoubtedly play a vital role in promoting peace, moderation and religious tolerance.

New Zealand, under the leadership of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, has shown us the way. Unity in diversity is the best way to defeat that scourge.

**Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to His

Excellency Mr. Çavuşoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, for holding the recent emergency ministerial meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Istanbul. I would also like to extend my thanks to his colleagues here in New York for skilfully conducting negotiations on resolution 73/285, entitled “Combating terrorism and other acts of violence based on religion or belief”, to address the criminal terrorist attack against innocent Muslim worshippers in Christchurch. Further, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation to the Prime Minister of New Zealand and her Government for their compassionate manners shown vis-à-vis the victims of this tragedy.

Given the barbarity of such actions, the Islamic Republic of Iran condemns this terrorist act in the strongest possible terms, offers its deepest sympathies to the families of the victims and wishes a quick recovery to the injured. Regrettably, countless human beings continue to be the victims of racist, xenophobic and Islamophobic attacks that are contemporary manifestations of ideologies and practices based on the racial or ethnic discrimination of superiority. Those abhorrent incidents are illustrative of the fact that the international community has fallen far behind in attaining the primary objective of combating terrorism, racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance, mainly because the root causes of those phenomena have not been adequately addressed.

In regard to the Christchurch attack, the anti-Muslim literature that the terrorists left behind is similar to the hate speech created in abundance by the mass media of certain Western countries, in obvious contradiction to articles 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Covenant defines the legal framework in order to prevent the misuse of the freedom of speech for propaganda for war or the advocacy of national racial or religious hatred that constitute incitement to hostility or violence.

Over the past few decades, there has been an unsettling rise in the vast network of xenophobic propaganda outlets masquerading as news platforms, hate groups masquerading as think tanks and even civic groups promoting a hostile and abusive environment against Muslim and other minorities, such as migrants in the West. As a result, we have seen political tolerance of hostility and discrimination, as well as the incitement of hate, gain ground against persons belonging to religious minorities, in particular Muslims, in recent years. Such efforts to spread propaganda are enabled by well-

financed institutions backed by affluent Government tycoons. If unchecked, that wicked network of xenophobia, with its socially motivated feeling of hate, has the capacity to undermine the stability of many societies and strain the relationship between States and great religions, thereby jeopardizing international peace and security.

It is essential that the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of those acts of terrorism conducted by members of racist and supremacist groups be held accountable and brought to justice. We appreciate those Western politicians who condemn racist and white supremacist terrorism in the strongest terms. At the opposite end of the spectrum are those officials who encourage Islamophobia, including through such measures as a travel ban against Muslims, banning Muslim symbols, such as scarves and minarets, and the abhorrent use of ignorant terms, such as “Islamic terrorism”, who should be reproached. As a pretext for fanning their Islamophobic extremism, some authorities in the West cite extremist terrorist groups, such as Da’esh and Al-Qaida, as purveyors of Islam, whereas in reality they have nothing to do with Islam.

At the same time, a serious dialogue should be initiated in order to find the ways and means to collectively combat Islamophobia, hatred and discrimination. Furthermore, the initiation of innovative and holistic approaches that can strengthen and enhance practical and effective measures to combat those devastating evils of humankind, with a view to their total elimination, must be planned and implemented. The global fight against such phenomena, with their abhorrent and evolving forms and manifestations, must be a matter of high priority at the national, regional and international levels.

**Ms. Suzuki (Japan):** First of all, we would like to express our appreciation to you, Madam, for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank Turkey for initiating resolution 73/285.

Japan firmly condemns the atrocious shooting carried out in Christchurch. On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I extend my sincere condolences to those who lost their lives and express heartfelt sympathy for their bereaved families and those who were injured. Japan expresses its sincere solidarity with the people of New Zealand in overcoming this difficult time.

Terrorism cannot be justified for any reason. In close cooperation with New Zealand and the international community, Japan is determined to resolutely stand up against terrorism.

**Mr. Tomysh** (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I would like to express our sincere condolences to the people and the Government of New Zealand and other countries whose citizens fell victim to the heinous attack in Christchurch.

It is reprehensible that a house of God was attacked and that one killer was able to cause such horrific devastation. We offer our condolences, especially to the families of the victims, and send our sincere wishes for a speedy recovery to the injured. We also express our great appreciation to the New Zealand police for their heroic efforts as the first responders.

That is the latest in a series of catastrophic tragedies that have befallen States Members of the United Nations in recent weeks and months, and more disasters can be anticipated in the future as all kinds of extremism are today on the rise. We, as the United Nations community, collectively share the immense grief experienced on so many fronts, from the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East and Africa to the Americas and Europe, and offer solidarity to each other. People of all faiths from various parts of the world have rallied around Muslims, with churches opening their doors to Muslim sisters and brothers. Such ghastly acts have united all of us in speaking with one voice for human security.

On behalf of Kazakhstan, we would like to congratulate Turkey and commend and applaud its leadership on this important matter and on resolution 73/285. We do indeed need to end Islamophobia, xenophobia and racism. We must unite, and we must ensure dialogue and uphold the Alliance of Civilizations. We must combat terrorism and other acts of violence based on religion and belief, and gradually build a world free of terrorism. Today we would like to especially welcome the participation in this meeting of His Excellency Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

Kazakhstan was proud to be a sponsor of the resolution, and we thank and congratulate all the other sponsors. Together with other Member States, the United Nations system and specialized organizations, we will strive multilaterally to bring an end to this threat. We are determined not to allow these terrorist

attacks to derail the political stability, durable peace and sustainable development of Member States.

**Mr. Ajayi** (Nigeria): Nigeria would like to express its solidarity with the Government and the people of New Zealand in the wake of last month's heinous terrorist attacks. We categorically condemn any act of terrorism wherever it may occur. Terrorism is a phenomenon that has no place in human history and should be condemned by all. In that context, we consider the adoption of resolution 73/285 to be a significant step in our collective determination to work to completely eradicate all evil deeds that have religious overtones.

Nigeria joined others in sponsoring the resolution to illustrate and affirm our strong commitment to efforts aimed at eliminating all forms of intolerance and attacks based on religion or belief. We consider intolerance by reason of religion or belief to be a criminal act that should be condemned all over the world. Nigeria, having suffered the odious manifestation of evil known as terrorism through the diabolical acts of the terrorists of Boko Haram, considers that this type of resolution represents our fundamental and highly moral obligation to save the world from the onslaught of extreme ideas and slogans that are susceptible to terrorism. Nigeria strongly believes in both the context and the substance of the resolution, because it represents a genuine leap forward in our collaborative, coherent and unified determination to stamp out all forms of divisive narratives and extremism, which clearly have no place in our society.

In conclusion, Nigeria would like to thank Turkey for the resolution and pledges to continue working in collaboration with others in order to eradicate all forms and manifestations of evil that fuel terrorism.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 72?

*It was so decided.*

#### **Agenda item 125 (continued)**

#### **Strengthening of the United Nations system**

##### **Draft resolution (A/73/L.78)**

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.78.

**Mr. Dapkiunas** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): “We the peoples of the United Nations”. Those are the opening words of the Charter of the United Nations, which has entered history not only as the most fundamental document in the history of international relations but also as a guiding compass for the coexistence of the nations, States and peoples of the world, but also as a supreme result and model of successful interpersonal cooperation. We know about the disagreements that accompanied the entire process of the difficult negotiations on the Charter, but they were all successfully overcome. The reason for that success was not just the will of States, inspired by the end of two bloody wars and fueled by the desire to put an end to the possibility of such tragedies in the future. The document came into being thanks to the professionalism, skill, faith and sacrifice of real people — representatives, who, 75 years ago, had the honour and responsibility of establishing an entirely new Organization, focused on the individual. Since then, it has seen many different resolutions, decisions and pacts that reflect the various aspects of world development. And every time, it is only the human factor — people’s refusal to be indifferent to the work that they are doing — that makes these documents useful and viable.

Every day we come to the United Nations, take part in talks and often not notice that our painstaking and creative efforts — which, alas, do not always produce the desired result — are helping to make this a better world. The Organization gives us, real people, a unique opportunity to learn how to agree with one another and listen to one another better. By expressing our best human qualities through dialogue, we, the real people, bring humanity to the routine work of the Organization that represents the added value that is essential to the United Nations today and that makes ours a better world.

The role of a United Nations representative is clear. It is not only a great honour but also involves great responsibility. Proper relationships between people help them to do big things, and the experience that representatives receive at the United Nations is invaluable. We want to remind every one of us how much depends on each of us. In that regard, Belarus is submitting for the General Assembly’s consideration draft resolution A/73/L.78, entitled “International Delegate’s Day”. The draft resolution makes historical reference to the establishment of the United Nations and

the role of representatives in its activities. It proposes to designate 25 April, the day when the conference on the establishment of the United Nations as an international organization began in San Francisco, as International Delegate’s Day, beginning next year. The idea is not to create yet another pretext for a holiday, but to ensure a greater feeling of the responsibility incumbent on us, the representatives, and the task entrusted to us. The delegate’s day will be dedicated not just to those involved in the system of foreign relations but to all who have worked and will work at the United Nations.

The draft resolution welcomes national celebrations and initiatives honouring diplomatic workers and services. In that regard, I would like to point out that my country, Belarus, recently observed its diplomatic service’s centenary and dedicated a special day to it that will be observed every year. We believe that the draft resolution reaffirms the unique nature of the United Nations as a place where multilateral diplomacy is established and developed, where dialogue is conceived and our communication skills are constantly being honed.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the States and representatives who took an active part in the negotiation process in order to reach an agreement on the text of the draft resolution. We would also like to thank the States that have already become sponsors of it and call on other Member States to join them in sponsoring a draft resolution that we believe truly defends human rights. People make history, and it is also people — ordinary representatives like us — who make the United Nations.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/73/L.78, entitled “International Delegate’s Day”.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/73/L.78, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, India, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.78?

*Draft resolution A/73/L.78 was adopted (resolution 73/286).*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): We shall now hear statements following the adoption of the resolution.

I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

**Mr. Pieper** (European Union): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

In the spirit of compromise, we have agreed to join the consensus in adopting resolution 73/286. Notwithstanding the undoubtedly important role of

United Nations representatives in shaping and agreeing policy outcomes, we would like to put on record our general concerns about resolutions of that kind, as we have already expressed on various other occasions. We are of the view that the resolution adopted today does not provide any specific added value, while at the same time running the risk of tarnishing the public image of the United Nations and its representatives. The European Union is convinced that our full attention should rather be on delivering on the common priorities that are dear to our citizens, as outlined by the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and other leaders.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 125.

*The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.*