



# General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

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New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Bozkir . . . . . (Turkey)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

## Agenda item 137 (continued)

### Seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War

#### Special solemn meeting in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War

**The President:** The General Assembly will now hold a special solemn meeting in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War, in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 75/5, of 5 November 2020.

In keeping with Assembly decision 75/501, of 18 September 2020, regarding the format of commemorative meetings, Member States are encouraged to deliver regional group statements.

I shall now make a statement.

This year, we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. In six years of war, approximately 75 million people lost their lives, the majority of whom were civilians. Today, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 75/5, we honour and remember all victims of war, those who sacrificed their lives and all the innocent lives that suffered.

The Second World War was one of the most catastrophic events in human history. Almost all States were affected. The Holocaust shocked the world. The aftermath was devastating. Across the globe, parents lost their children, and a generation grew up without their parents; poverty was rampant, and millions were

left destitute and starving. Economies were in tatters. The world witnessed the devastation of the atomic bomb. The brutality was incomprehensible.

That untold sorrow established the conditions for a strong multilateral platform, the United Nations, “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. The deadliest conflict in history demonstrated the clear need for a forum that could be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

As Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld said in 1954, “The United Nations was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell”.

While we are certainly not in heaven, neither are we in hell. As a collective community, we have made tremendous progress since the end of the Second World War in all aspects of human development. We have established many organizations to facilitate international and regional cooperation. The multilateral system is based on the promotion of democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the United Nations is at the heart of all those efforts.

But while much progress has been made, we can certainly do better and do more. Our founders recognized that the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, development and human rights — are equally important, interrelated and interdependent. One cannot advance without the other.

Peace, security, freedom and development are linked inextricably to the international promotion and protection of rights and freedoms. Failure to respect

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individual and collective human rights as well as discrimination and stigmatization are not only against the very principles of law and the international legal system; they also impede development and lead to insecurity.

Development goals have not been met, including the Millennium Development Goals. Similarly, we are not on track to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. We are not doing enough to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. We were not prepared for the pandemic and its consequences. Conflicts, unfortunately, continue to exist all around the world. So long as human rights and development challenges exist, conflicts will continue, and the continuation of conflicts will prevent millions from enjoying their rights and from living a dignified and prosperous life.

So today, as we commemorate all victims of war, we do so knowing that we still have much to do in order to deliver peaceful, just and developed societies, equal opportunities and qualified services in fundamental sectors such as education, health and infrastructure to all.

Many survivors of the Second World War are no longer with us. They cannot tell us their stories in person. Yet we must ensure that we do not forget their experiences or the lessons they have taught us. The horror of their experience drove us to put aside our differences and put humankind and the people first.

As we fight one of the principal challenges of our times, the coronavirus disease pandemic, and look to the next 75 years, let us remember the victims of the Second World War and let their fortitude inspire us to come together and strengthen the multilateral system to provide solutions to the greatest challenges facing us today.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

**The Secretary-General:** This year we marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations with tributes to the Organization's achievements and calls to strengthen multilateralism to meet long-standing and new challenges. But our observance of this milestone would not be complete without a recognition of the losses of the Second World War, which led to the formation of the United Nations itself: the millions who fell on the battlefield; the millions murdered by the Nazis in the Holocaust; the millions who were victims of genocide, mass starvation, disease, massacres

and aerial bombardment. It is our collective duty to remember them and to bear witness to their lives and deaths as we vow: never again.

That was the burning ambition that powered world leaders and their peoples to join together around the values of the Charter of the United Nations and its pledge "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

It was inconceivable to our founders that the world should allow such unspeakable suffering ever again. The Charter dared to imagine a world in which we practice tolerance and live together in peace, where we unite our strength to maintain international peace and security. It placed prevention and the peaceful resolution of disputes at the heart of its vision.

The tools set out in Chapter VI of the Charter, from negotiation, enquiry and mediation to conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement, have been effective in preventing another catastrophic global war. For the first time in history, 75 years have passed without a military confrontation between major Powers.

United Nations peacemaking and peacekeeping have helped end conflicts and supported reconciliation in countries across the world. The global community has built on the Charter with treaties and conventions addressing disarmament, the laws of war, political, civil, cultural, economic and social rights, and more.

But despite that progress, we continue to fall short in achieving the promise of the Charter. The climate crisis is creating dramatic new threats to peace and security. Inequalities are growing, and democratic space is shrinking. Human rights are under assault. Digital technology, including the exponential spread of disinformation, is dividing us further.

From Lake Chad to the Sahel, to Afghanistan and Yemen, wars persist, causing immeasurable loss. Our capacities to manage crises and resolve conflicts are at a breaking point. And this year, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has demonstrated the serious limitations of global preparedness, cooperation and solidarity.

The long-term effects of the pandemic are still unfolding, but it has already caused deep social and economic upheaval. Global poverty is increasing for the first time since 1998. The World Food Programme has warned that the pandemic could push 130 million more people to the brink of starvation. Gender equality

has been set back by decades. Women have been severely affected by the loss of jobs and livelihoods and by additional unpaid care work. Lockdowns and quarantines have trapped millions of women at home with their abusers, contributing to skyrocketing reports of domestic violence.

COVID-19 is highlighting the fragilities and unsustainable inequalities of our world. Unless we act now, it could lead to even greater instability and division, undermining our ability to fight the disease itself and reversing decades of progress towards peace and prosperity.

In March, I called for a global ceasefire to stop the violence, open space for diplomacy, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and enable a shared focus on battling the virus. I reiterated that call in my address to the General Assembly in September (see A/75/PV.4) and urged greater efforts to reach a global ceasefire by the end of the year.

I am encouraged by the support that my call received from all quarters, including some 180 Member States and regional organizations, more than 20 armed movements and other groups, and more than 800 civil-society organizations.

I also called for peace in the home and an end to violence against women and girls. Almost 150 countries expressed their support, but only a minority have followed through with policies and funding. As we mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, I appeal again for concrete commitments.

All efforts towards peace require the full, equal and meaningful participation of women. There can be no sustainable peace when half the population is excluded.

Partnerships with regional organizations are an essential element of United Nations peacemaking and peacekeeping, together with the active engagement of all stakeholders, including civil society, religious authorities and the private sector.

Millions of people around the world look to the United Nations to bring unity and coherence to global efforts for peace and human rights and to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. We cannot let them down. Nor can we forget those who died in the Second World War. We owe it to them to learn the lessons of history. All our efforts must be aimed at consigning such mindless bloodletting to the past.

Now is the time for global leaders to meet the global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic and move forward with unity of purpose. We count on all Members to support the United Nations in our vital work to prevent and resolve conflict and build peaceful, resilient communities and societies.

**The President:** I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

**Mr. Doualeh (Djibouti):** It is with profound respect that I speak today on behalf of the Group of African States at this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War.

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World war, a conflict that brought untold sorrow to humankind. This anniversary also has remarkable importance for the United Nations, whose founding took place on the ashes of that brutal war, which claimed millions of lives.

The Second World war was a time of unspeakable atrocities, of lost faith and a devastated humankind. Today we honour the countless victims who lost their lives. This special meeting is also an opportunity to recall the General Assembly's strong desire to make every possible effort to prevent and mitigate the human suffering that results from war.

It was the world's collective recoil from the horrors perpetrated during those darkest of times and its resolve that they must never be repeated that was the principal motivation for the post-war reconstruction of the United Nations system and of the international legal order founded on respect for human rights. Having survived the catastrophe of the Second World war, humankind sought to embrace new means to prevent the recurrence of such horrific events. To that end, the United Nations was established to ensure unity, harmony, tolerance and mutual accommodation among Member States.

As articulated in the Charter of the United Nations, the Organization was founded to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Over the past 75 years, war has not only shaped the United Nations mission, but its lessons continue to guide and inspire our work around the globe.

Let us not forget the many Africans enlisted or conscripted to fight the Axis countries in the Second World War. They were instrumental in bringing an end to the war, which was fought across Africa, Europe and the East. More than a million African served as combatants as well as war workers and carriers in the Second World War for the colonial Powers. We must fittingly honour those who sacrificed and won victory in Europe 75 years ago by continuing to build a freer, more just, law-based and peaceful world.

Today more than ever, we stand in solidarity under the guiding principles of the United Nations, which include non-aggression, the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts, and the need to protect and promote human rights at all times.

Today we remember and honour those who lost their lives in the brutal scourge of the Second World war and pay tribute to those whose memory we must never forget.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq, who will speak on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group.

**Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq):** At the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group. I am humbled to participate in the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and in commemorating its victims. Today we pay tribute to the millions who lost their lives and to those who suffered the woes of the Second World war, and we remember their sacrifices.

The Asia-Pacific Group believes that it is very important to commemorate the foundation of the current international framework, which was intended to promote peace and security through cooperation and solidarity and to reflect on the lessons learned from the scourge of war.

Today is not only a day of mourning but also a day to reaffirm our shared and collective responsibility for preventing such horrendous events from ever occurring again in future. However, at the present time we still have not escaped the tragedy of war in several parts of our world, where people are suffering on a daily basis to get their basic needs met to survive through the day.

On the other hand, the persistent threats of terrorism and of the continual proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remain a great threat to peace and security.

In resolution 75/5, the General Assembly recalled that the Second World war brought untold sorrow to humankind, particularly in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Pacific and other parts of the world, stressing that that historic event established the conditions for the creation of the United Nations, designed to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It underlined the progress made since the end of the Second World war in overcoming its legacy and towards reconciliation, international and regional cooperation and the promotion of democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular through the United Nations, and the establishment of regional organizations and other appropriate frameworks.

The lesson that humankind should learn from the grave experiences of the Second World war is that dialogue, cooperation, respect and responsible behaviour must prevail over the act of war, conflict and violence. Thus it is clear that we will benefit from cooperation. Global challenges such as the coronavirus disease pandemic do not discriminate on the basis of people's ethnic, religious or political affiliation. We all share the same destiny, and we all hold the same responsibility of ensuring a better future for present and coming generations.

The Asia-Pacific Group believes that it is possible to foster peace and stability throughout the world in order to achieve progress and development. The purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations should be honoured so that the mistakes of the past can be avoided. For the sake of those noble goals, States Members of the United Nations must favour cooperation, embrace multilateralism and put people at the centre.

In that regard, the Asia-Pacific Group commends the Secretary-General's inspiring leadership, supports his forward-looking and future-oriented efforts and underscores the principles of sovereign equality, respect for territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs and the resolution of international disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law.

The Asia-Pacific Group adheres to the principles of promoting international cooperation, reaffirms its commitment to multilateralism and highlights the nexus between sustainable development and peace. In that regard, we find it important to shed light on two main challenges, inter alia, that undermine collective

prosperity: terrorism and armed conflict. The Group believes that the best way to overcome those challenges is through effective United Nations mechanisms that should be collective in nature and equitable at their core. The Group therefore emphasizes the need to reform and strengthen the organs of the United Nations to make them more fit for the purpose for which they were intended, and especially the need to reform the Security Council.

In conclusion, the Asia-Pacific Group recognizes the need to respond to the new and emerging challenges of the future, while leading discussions on rules and norms and through broader structured cooperation.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Antigua and Barbuda, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

**Mr. Webson** (Antigua and Barbuda): I take the floor on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC).

GRULAC considers this moment to be very timely, and this most solemn meeting to be very important. As the General Assembly, we join in honouring the victims of the Second World War and commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of such a painful and bloody conflict that resulted in the defeat of Nazism, the establishment of the United Nations and the beginning of a new era of faith in a more peaceful, dignified, safe and prosperous world.

However, today the world faces new challenges that are as complex as they are multidimensional, such as the current struggle to combat the coronavirus disease pandemic, which has opened up new expectations for global unity in the face of a new type of common enemy that we are obliged to defeat. The Second World War resulted in more than 50 million victims, countless material losses and a legacy of pain whose wounds have not yet fully healed. Because of the war's global impact, it is the responsibility of the international community as a whole not to forget the lessons that this collective trauma left us, as well as the terrible consequences derived from racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and anti-Christian ideologies, and all those others "isms" that may promote ethnic superiority or religious or other forms of discrimination and intolerance, all of which have generated an almost unstoppable escalation of persecution and suffering from which even today we

are still try to recover. We shall therefore never forget the victims of the Second World War.

Many years and events have passed since the conclusion of that conflict: three quarters of a century, in fact — 75 years — and, although we remain only too aware of how difficult the journey we have taken has been, we also remain privileged to have new arrangements to deal with conflicts to which we relate. One of the greatest achievements following the end of the Second World War, without any doubt, was the establishment of the United Nations and the recognition of multilateralism as a value for humankind. Today we cherish and work to fulfil the hope and collective commitment not to repeat such ignominy and exalt new ways of living, including responding to new ways of negotiating our way to peace.

The Latin American and Caribbean region was not exempt from the scourge and the painful legacy of the Second World War, as it also suffered from the war's economic, political, military and social consequences. Within the context of the conflict, the political and economic support of our region, despite our pains, resulted in providing refuge for many of the survivors. We represent a major moral reserve that, in addition, once the war ended, opened its doors to millions of migrants and refugees, survivors of the war who actively contributed to the region's economic development and who regained their hope and zest for a better life after the trauma they had experienced. This heritage of values and cultural richness is a treasure that our region will never fail to dignify, honour and, of course, appreciate.

The Latin America and the Caribbean region has committed to being a nuclear-weapon-free zone, joining the global call for the full validity of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as various other international initiatives to promote regulations to control the manufacture and trade of weapons as a measure to ensure effective pathways towards peace. We reaffirm our conviction that dialogue and international cooperation, as well as sustained efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, constitute the most solid and appropriate means to achieve a peaceful, prosperous and safe world.

Moreover, GRULAC agrees that the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, together with the inclusion of those

approaches in the public policies of our countries, constitute an important step towards the consolidation of a firm base of values oriented towards the realization of the ideals of respect for sovereignty and peaceful coexistence, which everyone around the world sees as fundamental elements for achieving inclusive and prosperous societies.

Our region has faced multiple challenges in the last decades, including political and military traumas, as well as social instability. But we have also always been able to make progress in our efforts to find ways to solve our problems. Those have all been difficult challenges that, through knotty discussions and complex agreements, have led us to find delicate ways and make collective efforts to address our problems together.

Our region is made up of a deep diversity of ethnicities and cultures that enrich life and add both value and stability to our nations. We have been sustained under a general environment of great tolerance and exchange among people that, in turn, has kept us as a zone of peace and a regional group of nations free from nuclear war. In 2014, our leaders declared the intention to keep our region nuclear-free. As an important part of the lessons it learned from the Second World War, the Latin American and the Caribbean region has ratified its collective commitment to being a zone free of armed conflicts between nations.

In conclusion, 75 years after the end of the Second World War, which unified international efforts against a common enemy, notwithstanding ideological and political differences, it is our moral duty today to remember the victims, renew our commitment to the values of faith in humankind and the future that inspired them and respect the courage of the women and men who led the world to a new era of hope. In their honour and for their sacrifice and for the courage they exemplified in a determined struggle for peace, we say “never again”.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Malta, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

**Mrs. Frazier (Malta):** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, a conflict that brought about unspeakable misery and suffering and created an

unprecedented number of victims all over the globe. Countless people lost their lives. Countless others were deported and displaced. We cannot, and should not, forget their losses and sacrifices, including as a warning to new generations. We express our gratitude to all those who gave their lives in Asia, Africa, Europe and elsewhere in the fight against the Nazi regime and its allies in different parts of the world.

The end of the Second World War was a turning point in history. The magnitude and the horrors of the Holocaust in Europe, together with war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the war, and the systematic and tragic persecution and murder of countless Jews and other minority groups, were revealed. That led to a significant international effort to ensure accountability for perpetrators of the most serious crimes.

That understanding resulted in the signing of the Charter of the United Nations at San Francisco, providing a linchpin for the international rules-based order for the decades to come. The United Nations was founded to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. Lessons from the Second World War continue to inspire the guiding principles and human rights in the dignity and worth of the human person as we all collectively agreed in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations.

At a time of rising racism, nationalism, populism and xenophobia, today’s commemoration is also a stark reminder of where ideologies of bigotry and hate can lead. We must do everything in our power not to repeat the mistakes of the past. We must stand up for truth, for facts, for justice and human rights, everywhere and for everyone.

Although not perfect, the United Nations has delivered in many places around the world. Let us not forget this at a time when the benefits of multilateralism are being questioned. We have our principles and the Charter. We have a road map: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Alas, we also have common challenges, notably the emergencies of climate change and, now, dramatically, the global coronavirus disease pandemic.

Once again, we have to come together to rise to the challenge because only together will we succeed. As we reflect on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the foundation of the Organization, we must look towards the coming

75 years. We must redouble our efforts to advocate the democratic values and fundamental human rights that the United Nations was formed to protect. We owe it to all those who suffered and died under tyranny and all those who fought for our freedom 75 years ago.

**The President:** I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ambassador Kelly Craft of the United States, who will speak on behalf of the Host Country.

**Mrs. Craft** (United States of America): The Second World War inflicted unspeakable pain and suffering for tens of millions who fell victim to that horrendous chapter of humankind. And 75 years later, we still feel its impact. That is why the United States is proud to join the global community in commemorating the anniversary of the end of the War. The enormity of the human toll of the war demands that we reflect upon the lessons learned from the biggest tragedy of the twentieth century and pay our respects to its victims.

As President Harry Truman stated at the conclusion of the war,

“our thoughts go out to our gallant Allies in this war, to those who resisted the invaders, to those who were not strong enough to hold out, but who, nevertheless, kept the fires of resistance alive within the souls of their people, to those who stood up against great odds and held the line, until the United Nations together were able to supply the arms and the men with which to overcome the forces of evil. This is a victory of more than arms alone. This is a victory of liberty over tyranny.”

The war left an estimated 60 million dead worldwide, with civilians making up the majority of the countless wounded, displaced and missing.

We remember the horror of the Holocaust of the Jews, the genocide of the Roma and the persecution of the other marginalized groups by the Nazis and their sympathizers and collaborators. While we honour the memory of those mercilessly killed and tortured, as well as the trauma felt by generations, we must renew our solemn vow to fight against modern-day atrocities.

We call upon the international community to reflect upon and confront the lessons of that terrible war and to carry forth the voices and experiences of those who endured it, to teach the lessons of history to future generations. This is also a time to embrace our common humanity and affirm the sanctity of every precious life.

The vast death and destruction of the Second World War made obvious the need for a convening body dedicated to peace, security and human rights. Those objectives were enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and are the basis upon which we must work together today to build a peaceful, prosperous and just world for all.

Wherever those principles are violated, stability, development and human lives are threatened. As we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, we hold its victims in our collective hearts and memories. May we summon the political will to end the tyrannies of our own time, aid the victims of war and oppression and work for reconciliation and peace among all nations.

Again in the words of President Dwight D. Eisenhower,

“let us solemnly remember the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve our heritage of freedom, and let us reconsecrate ourselves to the task of promoting and enduring peace so that their efforts shall not have been in vain.”

**Mr. Gonzato** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, as well as Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

This year, we have commemorated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, a tragic chapter in the history of Europe and of the whole world, in the midst of a pandemic. We welcome the fact that, despite a difficult and not always transparent negotiation process, we could reach consensus on resolution 75/5, and we welcome that we could preserve the unity of the international community on this important subject and allow this postponed meeting, where we pay tribute to the victims of the war, to be organized.

We must remember the horrors of the past and the cruelty of war to prevent ourselves from repeating them. We have the responsibility of ensuring that such atrocities will never occur again. We also have to remember the sacrifices made and mourn all the people who lost their lives as victims of the war, of occupations and of repression, in particular those who were murdered in the Holocaust. We believe that

historical awareness is a necessary step to preventing similar crimes in future.

The United Nations was conceived to preserve international peace and security. In its very Preamble, the Charter of the United Nations reads,

“We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind”.

This important introductory phrase should never be forgotten.

We are acutely aware of the fact that it is not just the two World Wars that brought untold sorrow to humankind over the past century. Unfortunately, our efforts to maintain peace have failed too often. The European Union, which itself was born from the ashes of conflict, together with its member States, has pledged to work with all the States Members of the United Nations to avoid those scourges and create a more peaceful, just and prosperous world for future generations.

We note with regret that many crises remain unresolved and that new ones are arising. This anniversary year and the Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire should lead us to redouble our efforts to settle disputes by peaceful means.

We pay tribute to the historic role of the Allied forces and their sacrifices in the defeat of Nazism during the Second World War. However, we should likewise remember that the Second World War brought about painful divisions in Europe and that for many European countries the end of the Second World War brought not freedom but the commission of more crimes against humanity against their peoples.

We need to overcome the legacies of the war and build on the progress made since the end of the Second World War in promoting democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms. When it comes to commemoration, we should pay tribute to the women and men who fought for liberty and peace. They should inspire us to look forward with hope and to redouble our efforts for peace and dialogue. Today we, the States Members of the United Nations, must play this crucial role together.

The European Union and its member States believe that mutual respect and an honest and thorough debate on our history will facilitate reconciliation based on

truth and remembrance while preserving the memory of the victims of one of the darkest episodes in our history.

**Mr. Mahmaminov** (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): First and foremost, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today’s special solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War.

In my capacity as the representative of the country that currently chairs the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), I have the honour to read out the statement of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the CSTO — the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan — concerning the seventy-fifth anniversary of the victory of the Second World War:

“This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the bloodiest war in the history of humankind, which affected vast swaths of people all of the world. It is our solemn duty to preserve the memory of the great victory of our compatriots, who gave their lives and suffered colossal deprivation, who vanquished the enemy and liberated from Nazi enslavement the peoples of Europe and other countries around the world.

“The victory in 1945 was something of common value for humankind, as is demonstrated by the adoption, on 5 November 2020, of resolution entitled “Seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War” (resolution 75/5), which the countries of the CSTO co-sponsored. Victory in the Second World War was key for the current system of international relations. The decisions of the Nuremberg trials enshrined into law the victory of a civilized world over National Socialism.

“Unfortunately, we can see in recent years that there has been an increase in the number of attempts to distort history or make sure that the lessons of the war are forgotten. We believe that the international community must counter any manifestations of neofascism, chauvinism or forms of xenophobia, hate, racial or national supremacy, and also of radical nationalism.

“We firmly condemn any efforts by some political forces to rewrite history and distort the

outcomes of the Second World War. We express our deep concern as to the glorification in any form of the Nazi movement, neo-Nazism or former members of the Waffen-SS organization, including those that take the form of erecting monuments and memorials and carrying out public demonstrations in order to glorify the Nazi past, the Nazi movement and neo-Nazism, as well as through calling or attempting to call members of those organizations, those who fought against the anti-Hitler coalition and those who collaborated with the Nazi movement and committed war crimes and crimes against humanity participants in a national liberation movement, and renaming streets in their honour.

“We also believe it is unacceptable to wage deliberate war on monuments and memorials to the graves of our brothers who fought for our freedom. Attempts to rewrite history run the risk of letting the tragic errors of the past be repeated. In that connection, we call for support for the annual General Assembly resolution on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

“We underscore the need to step up efforts to prohibit crimes against humanity; the spread of ideologies of hatred and extremism; discrimination on ethnic, racial or religious grounds; and other inhumane acts. To the generation of victors, we owe a solemn duty to truthfully preserve, for present and future generations, the history of the liberation of the world from the misanthropic Nazi ideology and to uphold traditions and a spirit of unity.”

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to deliver this statement of behalf of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and my own country, the Russian Federation, as co-sponsors of the annual resolution on combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Seventy-five years ago, we achieved a victory over a common enemy and put an end to the most horrific world war, which brought untold sorrow to humankind in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Pacific and other parts of the world. That victory is the common heritage of humankind and a monument to the unity of peoples in the face of unprecedented evil.

Let us forever cherish the memory of those who sacrificed their lives in the name of victory; who fell in battle; who died of injuries, exhaustion and hunger; and who were tortured to death as prisoners of war in concentration camps. Let us bow our heads in honour of their memory.

We will never forget the great sacrifice of the peoples of the Soviet Union. Twenty-seven million of its citizens died in that war of extermination, two thirds of them civilians. It has left a deep imprint on every family’s history. Their suffering and the pain of loss are still fresh in the memory of our nations.

We pay tribute to the tremendous sacrifice and courage of the people of China, who lost more than 35 million soldiers and civilians and made indelible historic contributions to the victory of the world anti-Fascist war on the main battlefield in Asia.

We remember the fortitude and bravery of all Europeans who resisted Nazism. We remember the valour of the soldiers of the Allied coalition and the brotherhood in arms and unprecedented cooperation of the Allies. No one is forgotten; nothing is forgotten. The purpose of the commemoration is not to perpetuate hatred but to draw a lesson from history, look to the future and jointly cherish and safeguard peace.

On 20 November, we marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the commencement of the Nuremberg Tribunal, which also served as a template for the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. War crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Nazis, the Axis, the Fascists, the militarists and their collaborators were established by both tribunals and outlawed forever.

Unfortunately, nowadays we can see shameful attempts to rewrite the history of the Second World War and false narratives that deny the history of aggression or even glorify aggressive war and colonial rule. We witness attempts to erase the memory of heroic acts, destroy war monuments and prohibit medals and symbols of glory associated with the victory. There can

be no justification for that, no matter what political or geopolitical reasoning may be behind it. Those who commit such acts will never erase the incontestable verdict of history.

The main responsibility to prevent and combat the spread of neo-Nazism lies with States. At the same time, the international community must remain alert and united to root out any hint of Nazi ideology. We must prevent the recurrence of the massacres of war. We must do so for the memory of those who gave up their lives in the Second World War.

With that in mind, our countries annually introduce a draft resolution entitled “Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”. We are thankful to the international community for its overwhelming support of that initiative.

Our Organization and the great victory are twins: the founding of the United Nations is the result of that victory, and the principles on which it was built remain relevant to this day. We are committed to safeguarding those principles and to continuing our endeavour of saving future generations from the scourge of war.

**Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine):** Ukraine belongs to the region where the Second World War was unleashed. Yet the date 1 September 1939 was far from being the initial stage of the plan designed by Hitler, including in collusion with Stalin. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed in Moscow on 23 August 1939, had delineated the spheres of interest between the two dictatorships and heralded further division in Europe for decades.

The Poles and the Ukrainians were among the first victims of a part of the plan, when Nazi soldiers from the West and Soviet soldiers from the East marched into the territory of Poland and today’s western Ukraine and later invaded the Baltic States.

The Soviets killed thousands of Ukrainians during the occupation, and then killed even more while retreating in 1941, destroying and setting fire to important infrastructure in towns and cities in the face of the advancing Nazi troops. Then, in 1944, the pattern was reversed: the advancing Soviet troops did the shelling while the retreating Nazi troops set fire to all that remained.

The Ukrainians also sacrificed millions of lives fighting enemies in that war. In just two battles at Kyiv,

in 1941 and 1943, hundreds of thousands were killed. The cruellest thing was that, in 1943, to liberate the capital city of Kyiv from Nazi occupation on the eve of the anniversary of the Communist putsch, the lives of dozens of thousands of Soviet soldiers were not spared.

Yet today there is a country that demanded the removal from the draft statement of the Group of Eastern European States on today’s occasion of the acknowledgement of the responsibility of totalitarian regimes and the horrors of the Holocaust and of the need to address current security threats posed by the ongoing conflicts in Europe. Without those things, the following draft statement, if approved, would have been incomplete. It reads:

“With this special meeting of the General Assembly, we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and pay our earnest tributes to all the victims of the war around the globe for the sacrifices made in fighting Nazism and other totalitarian regimes.

“This year is also the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations — the institution created to mark a new beginning and assigned with stewardship to maintain international peace and security and prevent atrocities in the new world order.

“While the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations demonstrated a united commitment to multilateralism and reinvigorated hope for international stability, democracy and prosperity, the end of the Second World War brought different consequences for different States — and that is true in particular for our region. The war and the horrors of the Holocaust not only cost our countries millions of human lives; they also left Europe deeply divided for several decades and brought even more injustice to some. While commemorating the end of the Second World War, we have to remember the victims of all crimes against humanity committed during and after the Second World War.

“Our task in commemorating is to draw the right lessons from history and reaffirm our commitment to not repeating the mistakes of the past. Only by ensuring accountability for all crimes against humanity and war crimes can we pave the way to ensuring long-lasting peace. Upholding and strengthening multilateralism,

promoting respect for international law and defending the universality of human rights are key in addressing current security threats posed by the ongoing conflicts in Europe and beyond.

“Peace in the modern world is still not universal, and the legacy of the Second World War should remind us of the need to act collectively and in a timely manner against the re-emergence of populism, nationalism, authoritarianism, racism and xenophobia. Today many other challenges, such as pandemics, climate change, terrorism and cyberthreats, contribute to the list of threats to international peace and security. All those challenges call for stronger cooperation and a renewed commitment to a credible rules-based international order, with the United Nations at its core. Global challenges require collective action, and we owe it to the millions of lost lives that we commemorate here today.”

**Ms. Ivanovic** (Serbia): This year we mark 75 years since the end of the Second World War, one of the greatest tragedies that humankind has experienced in its recent history, the lessons of which must never be forgotten. The horrors of the war — brought about, among other things, by the ineffective multilateral order prevalent between the two World Wars — taught us that we need a system that will limit the self-will and arrogance of States.

The scope and magnitude of the war led humankind to inaugurate mechanisms to prevent such evil from occurring ever again. That in turn led to the strengthening of international cooperation and the creation of the United Nations, which has sought for more than seven decades to establish and maintain a stable and collective peace that is predicated on the broadest possible consensus agreements reached by all nations. The Allies’ victory in the Second World War was the key step towards the establishment of the largest world Organization based on principles that remain valid today, the safeguarding and preservation of which are among our highest callings.

This year we also marked 75 years since the establishment of United Nations and the signing of the Charter of the United Nations. The anniversary is an opportunity for us to look at the problems and challenges that we face today and join forces in promoting ever more strongly our collective commitment to multilateralism and the principles we have committed ourselves to

upholding in order to create a better world in which the horrors of war will never again be repeated.

This is also an opportunity for me to remind the Assembly of the suffering and destruction that the Second World War brought to then-Yugoslavia and the attempts to systematically exterminate the members of my Serbian people in the death camps of the independent State of Croatia, in which Serbs, Jews and Roma were tortured and killed in the most brutal way. Nonetheless, epic heroism arose from that tragedy and the Serbian people, standing ground with the Allies, defeated the aggressor and inscribed Serbia’s name in the history of humankind. In doing so, it made a solemn bequest to generations of Serbs to cherish the memory of the tragedy and the heroism, as well as the eventual victory.

Regrettably, we have witnessed attempts by some recently to diminish the victory and relativize its significance by peddling false interpretations and even bringing war crimes into question. That is unacceptable and offensive to the enormous sacrifices made by our fathers. Serbia has therefore been at the forefront of efforts to ensure that the sufferings of the bitter past are not forgotten, while looking forward to the future at the same time.

I speak as the representative of a country that sustained immense suffering and underwent enormous sacrifices in the fight against Fascism and Nazism during the Second World War. In that capacity, I would like to remind the Assembly that we all have a moral obligation to cherish the memory of the suffering and sacrifices and to learn the lessons left by the most destructive conflict in humankind’s recent history, just as we are duty-bound to confront and repel each and every attempt to relativize the events of the Second World War. Only in that way can we create the vision of a brighter future based on the common values of freedom, cooperation, understanding, tolerance and respect for diversity and for human rights.

**Mr. Sharma** (India): We are grateful to you, Sir, for convening this meeting to commemorate all victims of the Second World War. We also thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for having piloted resolution 75/5, which called for this meeting. We are thankful to the Russian Federation for hosting the Victory Day parade at Red Square on 24 June to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations. Our Defence Minister was present on that occasion, and a tri-service

contingent of the Indian armed forces took part in the parade.

There can be no real statistical measurement of the human and material cost of the Second World War. No figure can quantify the human loss, deprivation and suffering, the dislocation of peoples and economic life or the sheer physical destruction of property that the world witnessed. We salute the valiant young men, women and people of all the countries who fought to save the world. Indian soldiers participated in the war effort in their millions and suffered immense casualties.

It is disheartening to note that, despite the contribution of thousands of volunteers from the colonial world to the war efforts of the Allied forces, the contribution of those brave men and women has not been given its due recognition. Although the battle fronts of Europe have been romanticized in novels, history books and films, much of the war was fought in and over colonies controlled by the colonial Powers, with front lines springing up from North Africa to East Asia. The Second World War remains the greatest military engagement in the history of the Indian subcontinent.

Despite being under colonial occupation, India contributed 2.5 million soldiers, who fought in every theatre of the Second World War — from North Africa to Europe and as far East as Hong Kong. The Indian army was also the largest volunteer force ever raised in history, of whom 87,000 died or went missing and more than 100,000 suffered grave injuries. We also cannot forget the sacrifices of our Asian, African and other brothers and sisters who fought and died for the freedom of the Allied Powers although they were under the yoke of colonial rule.

The commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the most fundamental principle and purpose of the United Nations — to ensure that successive generations are saved from the scourge of war.

Terrorism has emerged as one of the means of waging war in the contemporary world. It threatens to entangle the world in carnage similar to that witnessed during the two World Wars. Terrorism is a global phenomenon and can be defeated only by global action. Let us rededicate ourselves to fight contemporary forms of warfare and ensure a more peaceful and secure world.

**Ms. Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are today commemorating an important historic event that changed the face of the world as we know it: the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, whose victims we recall.

The Second World War was unprecedented in its cruelty and scope, representing a grave catastrophe for all the peoples of the world, particularly those who dared to confront Nazism. It changed the trajectory of our world, the destiny of its people and the world map. It also represented a major threat to the principles on which humankind's civilization had been built.

The international community faced a challenging ordeal, as a result of which our Organization was established. The Charter of the United Nations set forth the international legal framework and the basic principles upon which international relations were to be built — respect for the sovereignty and sovereign equality of all Member States, non-interference in the domestic affairs of States and the prohibition of the threat or use of force.

The Second World War concluded with victory over Nazism and Fascism. The victorious countries, including my own, pledged to work together to maintain international peace and security and save humankind from the scourge of war, which twice has brought horrors greater than those of the plague that afflicted Europe and the world in the Middle Ages. Their victory allowed them to build those foundations, establish international and regional cooperation and promote democratic values and human rights.

The falsification of history is a dangerous matter because it erodes the very pillars on which the contemporary global order was developed after the end of the war. It creates a bad environment that encourages neo-Nazism and xenophobia. In that context, the falsification of the facts of the Second World War by certain States arouses our concern, denunciation and condemnation. They seek to deny the contributions of the former Soviet Union and its successor, the Russian Federation, which sacrificed more than 27 million victims in confronting Nazism.

My country's delegation regrets the continuous war waged in a number of States against the monuments and memorial sites associated with those who fought alongside the allies. States that deny such sacrifices will not find it difficult to deny the sacrifices made by the people, the army and the leadership of Syria in

facing the scourge of international terrorism, which is multifaceted and goes by many different names. We are very concerned about the declining collective awareness of the dangers of war, hostility and conflict.

In conclusion, my country, Syria, highly appreciates the sacrifices that people made to defeat the alliance of Nazism and Fascism. My country reiterates its belief in, and commitment to, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which it signed with the other founding members at San Francisco. Syria calls on all Member States to unite their efforts to confront the challenges and threats to international peace and security in order to avoid the horrors that our world experienced twice in one century. Let us recall Ibn Khaldun, the famous Arab thinker, who said that humankind cannot exist without cooperation.

**Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan):** At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers in emphasizing the importance of this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly. The Second World War brought untold sorrow to humankind. Its scope and the loss of human life and property were unprecedented. The horrors of the war, the sacrifices made and the victims should never be forgotten.

Today's meeting gives us an opportunity to pay tribute to those who fought for peace, freedom and human dignity, commemorate the many millions of victims of the Second World War and remember its terrifying atrocities and destruction. The war touched all continents and peoples, sparing no one from pain and suffering. There is not a single family in my country that was not affected in one way or another by the Second World War. Even though the hostilities occurred beyond the territory of Azerbaijan, our people underwent and overcame a severe ordeal and made their contribution to victory.

Azerbaijan mobilized for the army more than 600,000 of its sons and daughters, half of whom sacrificed their lives. Many Azerbaijanis also fought as members of the resistance in France, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands and the former Yugoslavia.

Victory was achieved not only on the battlefield but also at home. In a very short time frame, Azerbaijan set up factories for the production of ammunition and armaments and hosted industrial enterprises that had been relocated from the war theatre.

The true heroism was the selfless service and dedication of the people of Azerbaijan, who worked day and night in oil production. During the Second World War, Baku — one of the major oil producers and suppliers — secured almost 80 per cent of all the oil extracted in the entire former Soviet Union, 90 per cent of its naphtha and 96 per cent of its lubricants. Four out of five Soviet aircraft, tanks and trucks used in the course of the Second World War ran on fuel produced in Baku refineries from oil extracted from Baku oilfields.

The lessons of the Second World War have remained relevant for shaping our contemporary world and the future of international relations. The desire to save humankind from the scourge of war inspired countries to create a mechanism to maintain international peace and security: the United Nations, our Organization. In the immediate post-war period, the successful establishment of multinational judicial institutions for the purpose of prosecuting and punishing crimes with an international dimension and scope demonstrated how effective international justice can be when there is political will to support it.

This commemoration must serve as an opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to unite our efforts in addressing the threats and challenges to international peace and security and strengthening the tools for ending impunity.

**Mr. Ibragimov (Uzbekistan):** At the outset, I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this important event in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War.

Seventy-five years ago, the world was set free from Fascism, racial superiority, humiliation and fear. The republics of the former Soviet Union made major sacrifices to achieve victory in that horrific war, which was conducted with unprecedented, merciless and unrelenting harshness. More than 75 million people were killed, and millions were left crippled, not to mention the great numbers of those who were widowed or orphaned.

The people of the former Soviet Union, in the face of pain, deadly threats and deprivation, fought bravely on the front lines and in the rear for our dignity, freedom and peace.

About 2 million people from Uzbekistan also fought in that war. Of those, 538,000 perished on the

battlefield, 60,000 became handicapped and more than 158,000 went missing during the war. A total of 120,000 Uzbek citizens were bestowed with various military awards, including some from European countries. During the war, more than 1.5 million people from other republics of the former Soviet Union were evacuated to Uzbekistan, including 200,000 children. Many families took in orphans. One bright example of that compassion was the family of a blacksmith, Mr. Shamakhmudov, which adopted 15 orphans of various nationalities to nurture and raise as their own.

The Second World War victory is a part of world history and an integral part of the people of the former Soviet Union. The whole world paid a high price for the victory over fascism. We should therefore never forget the scourge of the Second World War. We must keep those memories alive to teach younger generations and to help raise peace-loving descendants. We should strengthen the United Nations and further its goals by nurturing an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding among peoples and nations to promote global peace and stability.

**Mr. Margaryan** (Armenia): The seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War is an opportunity to remember and pay tribute to all those who sacrificed their lives for the peaceful future of the world. The Armenian people made a great contribution to the victory in the Second World War. Almost 600,000 Armenians participated in the war and more than half of them did not return from the battlefields.

The victory paved the way for the establishment of the United Nations as a common endeavour for humankind to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The Charter of the United Nations stands as the cornerstone of the new world order, resting upon the objective of developing friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples. It is thanks to that principle that the membership of the United Nations family has significantly increased since its founding.

Despite the major achievements of the United Nations in promoting peace and security over the past 75 years, we continue to face armed conflicts, exported violence and instability, the use of foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries, gross violations of human rights and atrocities and war crimes, including in our region. The successors of the Armenians who fought

in the battlefields of the Second World War for the freedom of humankind had to stand again to defend their homes, their inalienable human rights and their right to freely define their own future.

In the twenty-first century, we still witness State-led policies of hatred, the encouragement of hate crimes and atrocities aimed at the complete extermination of ethnic and religious groups and erasing any trace of their civilizational presence in their historic homeland. We firmly believe that intolerance, the cultivation of identity-based hate speech, warmongering and denial of past crimes, in particular at the highest political level, if not addressed properly, can lead to new mass atrocities.

The international community should respond decisively to the use of force as a means for conflict resolution. It is through commitment to the principles of non-use of force or threat of force and the peaceful resolution of disputes that the States Members of the United Nations can focus on collectively addressing the emerging threats to peace and security in our modern times.

**Mr. Mabhongo** (South Africa): We associate ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Djibouti on behalf of the Group of African States. We also thank the Russian Federation for this initiative.

South Africa has a shared, proud history with those forces that gained victory over fascism in order to save the world from the yoke of slavery and catastrophe during the Second World War. A total of 334,000 South Africans of all races and backgrounds volunteered to fight in the various theatres where the war was conducted. The victory had a significant impact and influenced the end of the colonial system, leading to the emergence of independence in Asia and Africa. That victory would also pave the way for the intensification of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. The independence of States that were under colonial rule, such as ours, was also made possible by the unstinting internationalism that triumphed over evil during the Second World War.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records 11,000 graves of known South Africans who perished during the Second World War. We therefore believe that it is important to continue to honour the graves and memorials of those who perished in the Second World War. Those memorials are important because they act as historical touchstones; they link the

past to the present and enable all of us to remember and respect the sacrifices of those who died, fought, participated or were affected by the war.

The era following the Second World War saw the emergence of global institutions of governance such as the United Nations, which was established with clear purposes and principles, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations — foremost of which is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In our view, the United Nations and its Member States and partners should continue to protect and promote the core system of multilateralism, which has proved its value over the past 75 years.

South Africa therefore takes this opportunity to reaffirm our unwavering belief in, and commitment to, multilateralism and international law. We believe that the advancement of the common goal of lasting and sustained peace through diplomacy, including in dealing with contemporary challenges, enjoins Member States to work together in cooperation and partnership.

The coronavirus disease pandemic is the latest global challenge that requires a robust multilateral response by the international community in order to address its multidimensional impacts on health, development, peace, security and livelihoods in general.

We therefore need a united stand to oppose the narrow nationalist and fascist positions held by some who seek to weaken and defeat multilateralism and promote unilateralism and isolationism. A weakening of multilateralism and international law would diminish the prospects for the attainment of international peace and security and further exacerbate current challenges and threats.

As we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, it is a matter of concern that the global system of governance and its key institutions remain largely unreformed and not representative of the world of today. We need to effect changes in the system and hasten the reform of key organs, including the Security Council. We believe that reform will make those institutions more effective in the discharge of their duties and will better capacitate them to deliver on the maintenance of international peace and security and the creation of a fair, just, equitable and representative international order.

In conclusion, as we mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War,

let us imagine a new world, which, in the words of Nelson Mandela:

“must be a world of democracy and respect for human rights, a world freed from the horrors of poverty, hunger, deprivation and ignorance; relieved of the threat and the scourge of civil wars and external aggression, and unburdened of the great tragedy of millions forced to become refugees.”

**Mr. Tozik** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus aligns itself with the statements made in commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War by the representative of the Russian Federation, on behalf of the Member States and the co-sponsors of resolution 75/5, as well as by the representative of Tajikistan, on behalf of the member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

The Republic of Belarus, alongside its brotherly States, has made a valuable contribution to that great victory. That historic event put an end to the most bloody and destructive war in history. The war led to millions of deaths and caused great suffering to humankind as a whole. Victory allowed for the creation of the United Nations in order to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

In recent times, we have more often heard sceptical voices raising questions about how much today’s world needs to remember the lessons of the Second World War. They ask: “Isn’t it time to turn the page on this chapter of history?” We answer: “No, it’s not.” It will never be the time to do so, because the last day humanity will remember this global disaster would be the first day of the final world war.

Our memory of this event is the moral duty of humankind to the tens of millions of victims of this past war and all those who were brave enough to stave off the pressure of Nazism. Our memory is our future; those who forget the lessons of history are condemned to repeat them.

While States seriously consider strategies based on regional or global supremacy, while restraint, tolerance and compassion are seen in international politics as weakness, and threats of the use of force and sanctions almost as virtue; while political and military strategies contemplate seizing parts of other States and using weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons — we

do not believe that the lessons of the Second World War have been duly learned.

Today we are facing another war — the manipulation and distortion of history, the glorification of Nazism with neo-Nazi parades, a war against the memory of heroes who fought Nazism, thanks to whom we are all here today. This is cynical, cowardly and abominable. There is no dignity or bravery in it. The fight against monuments that do not resist is easy because it is not a victory on the battlefield. It is a deliberate attempt to erase the legacy of real history. Playing with history and manipulating the results of the Second World War is extremely dangerous. We must all bear responsibility before history, our peoples and the international community.

**Mrs. Furman** (Israel): Following the darkest years in its history seventy-five years ago, Europe has emerged from under the grip of tyranny. We owe our freedom to the courage and determination of the Allied armies — the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, Canada, France and other countries — that fought to restore freedom to the world. The nations that joined together to defeat the Nazis and their allies did not always agree but, despite their political differences, they knew that evil had to be stopped. The losses were immense. The Russians alone lost more than 20 million people. The people of Israel will never forget the bravery of the Russian people and their sacrifice.

Today we honour all those who made victory possible. We also mourn the tens of millions of victims of history's darkest hours. For Israel and the Jewish people, the Second World War is synonymous with the Holocaust. Families were torn apart, vibrant communities destroyed and one third of the Jewish people, including 1.2 million children, were murdered. The numbers tattooed on the arms of our parents and grandparents are an enduring reminder of the horrors they suffered, of a time when a person was a number rather than someone's father or brother or son.

The passage of time now threatens to cloud the world's memory. With every passing year, the number of survivors, veterans and witnesses left to recount their first-hand experience diminishes. The responsibility therefore falls to us to preserve the memory of the past and to ensure that the lessons of history are passed on to future generations.

But freedom is once again under attack in Europe and in many other places around the world. Time and

again, in the heart of Europe, angry mobs can be heard chanting calls against the Jews, and synagogues and other religious institutions are attacked. Jews are afraid to walk down the streets wearing religious symbols. The pandemic provides fertile ground for old and new anti-Semitic tropes to grow.

The writing is on the wall. Former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin once said, "If an enemy says he seeks to destroy us, believe him; do not doubt him for a moment."

History has taught us that we must be able to defend ourselves, now and forever. The State of Israel is a fulfilment of that teaching. Never again will Jews be rounded up like cattle and marched to their deaths. Never again will the world think that Jews can be targeted with impunity. We know the evil of which humans are capable, and we know that some things are worth fighting for. Freedom is worth fighting for; equality is worth fighting for; democracy is worth fighting for.

Seventy-five years ago, a generation of men and women sacrificed their lives in war so that we could inherit freedom, equality and democracy. We cannot allow their sacrifice to be made in vain. With courage and conviction, we must keep fighting for the ideals for which they lived and died.

**Mr. Warraich** (Pakistan): The Second World War was the most destructive war in human history. Its fascist ideologies, based on atavistic notions of racial superiority, sought to impose the totalitarian outlook across the globe. Millions of lives were lost to that insatiable ambition for hegemony and global domination. From the verdant battlefields of East Asia to the vast desert expanses of the Middle East and Africa, the people of the subcontinent, including from areas constituting Pakistan, although under the colonial yoke, scripted a tale of unmatched heroism and valour in their struggle. As we pay homage to the sacrifice of all of those victims, we must also reflect on the lessons of the Second World War.

First, grave atrocities and crimes against humanity do not happen in a day. They germinate over time in a toxic brew of bigotry, hatred and intolerance. Hate speech is a precursor to atrocity crimes.

Secondly, the international community will ignore the menace of fascist and supremacist ideologies at its

own peril. The millions of lives lost across the world serve as a stark reminder that inaction is not a choice.

Thirdly, a policy of appeasement does not work with fascist ideologies, if at all. Rather, it emboldens them. Concerted global actions are required to defeat totalitarian ideologies.

We are unfortunately witnessing a global resurgence of fascist ideologies, hate speech, xenophobia, Islamophobia, incitement to violence and acts of brute violence. Those trends have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the most serious global crisis since the founding of the United Nations.

Grave crimes against humanity is the tragic legacy of the Second World War. We should not repeat the same mistake by turning a blind eye to contemporary and emergent threats. Only then can we fulfil the abiding ideals of the Charter of the United Nations of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to promote social progress and better standards of living in larger freedom.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker for the special solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 137?

*It was so decided.*

### **Agenda item 3 (continued)**

#### **Credentials of representatives to the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly**

##### **(b) Report of the Credentials Committee**

###### **Report of the Credentials Committee (A/75/606)**

**The President:** The Assembly has before it a draft resolution entitled “Credentials of representatives to the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly”, recommended by the Committee in paragraph 13 of its report.

I now give the floor to the Chair of the Credentials Committee, Mr. Kennedy Godfrey Gastorn of Tanzania.

**Mr. Gastorn** (United Republic of Tanzania): On behalf of the Credentials Committee, I have the honour to introduce report of the Credential’s Committee concerning the credentials of the representatives to

the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, as contained in document A/75/606.

Having considered the credentials of the representatives to the seventy-fifth session at its meeting on 23 November 2020, the Credentials Committee adopted without a vote a draft resolution accepting those credentials. The Committee also recommended to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution concerning the credentials of representatives to the seventy-fifth session, as contained in paragraph 13 of the report of the Committee.

I would like to note that, since the day of the Committee’s meeting, formal credentials in the form required by rule 27 of the rules of procedure were received by the Committee’s Secretary regarding Brazil, Cambodia and the United States of America.

The draft resolution approving the report of the Credentials Committee is therefore before the General Assembly for its adoption.

*Ms. Kadare (Albania), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Committee and to the Secretariat for facilitating our work.

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution entitled “Credentials of representatives to the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly”, recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 13 of its report.

The Credentials Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

*The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 75/19).*

**The Acting President:** 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. Velásquez** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I take the floor today on behalf of the delegations of Lima Group countries Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay and Peru, as well as the delegations of Australia, Ecuador, El Salvador, the United States, Georgia, Haiti, Israel, the Marshall Islands, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Korea, with a view of stating on record that the approval of

the report of the Credentials Committee (A/75/606) regarding the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly should not be interpreted as those countries' tacit recognition of Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros' regime or of his designated representatives to the Assembly.

In addition to our countries, more than 50 States do not recognize Mr. Maduro's illegitimate regime in Venezuela. Instead, they recognize Mr. Juan Guaidó as Acting President of Venezuela.

**Mr. Ghadirkhomi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the work of the Credentials Committee and thanks its Chair, the Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania, for the Committee's report (A/75/606).

My delegation joined consensus on resolution 75/19, recommended by the Committee. However, I would like to express my delegation's reservations about the parts of the report and the resolution that could be construed as a recognition of the Israeli regime.

**Mr. Moncada** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the General Assembly for accepting the credentials of our delegation as the sole legitimate representatives of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. That decision is an acknowledgment of the sovereign will of our people to elect their Government in peace. It is an acknowledgment of our right to self-determination and our commitment to international law.

The use of the General Assembly to attack Member States is an attack on the entire system of relations among sovereign States, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Today we have seen the failure of an illegal practice that would allow a group of countries to designate the authorities and diplomatic representatives of other countries, in rejection of the sovereign will of their peoples.

The Government of the United States of America has unleashed a campaign of colonial aggression against my country. Last year, it carried out a false-flag operation in order to justify a foreign invasion. It then brought its Vice-President, Mike Pence, to the Security Council (see S/PV.8506) to expel us from the United Nations. A few days later, it promoted a coup d'état that jeopardized peace in the region.

This year, the United States threatened to use its military forces on our borders as it looked for excuses to invade and organized a terrorist attack with mercenaries close to our capital. It also stole our

funds held by international banks, blocked us from purchasing food and medicine and from selling our oil, with the aim of destroying — through hunger and sickness — our people's desire for freedom. All of this was done in the middle of the worst pandemic to strike humankind in 100 years. This is twenty-first century colonialism, carried out before the eyes of the world. It is contempt for the political freedoms and human rights of the peoples of the world.

But hatred poisons those who hate. We now see that those who began with an attempted coup d'état in Venezuela ended with an attempted coup in the United States. President Trump does not recognize the elections of Venezuela, but he also does not recognize the will of the voters in his own country. That is why he is rejected at the United Nations, just as he is in his own country.

Next Sunday, on 6 December, there will be elections in Venezuela in order to choose our destiny in freedom and peace. We hope that the minority — the countries that supported the American colonial adventure — recognize their mistakes and join the majority of the international community, which here and now accepts the will of our people and the legitimacy of our Government. Venezuela will always be free and sovereign.

**Mrs. Llano** (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua welcome the work of the Credentials Committee and endorses its recommendation to the General Assembly, which, in our view, is very committed to the rules of procedure and the Charter of the United Nations as it relates to the credentials of Member States.

Nicaragua bases its international relations on respect for sovereignty, non-interference and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has one constitutional President who was democratically elected by its people, President Nicolás Maduro Moros. We convey to him our full support and solidarity, as we always have done. The situation in that brotherly country is an internal affair, which is up to our Venezuelan brothers to resolve in line with their Constitution and their laws.

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

May I taken it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 3 and agenda item 3 as a whole?

*It was so decided.*

## Agenda item 15

### Culture of peace

#### Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/233)

#### Draft resolution (A/75/L.28)

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.28.

**Ms. Fatima** (Bangladesh): On behalf of 99 co-sponsors, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace”, as contained in document A/75/L.28.

This year, considering the constraints posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, we decided on a technical rollover of resolution 74/21, adopted last year. Draft resolution A/75/L.28 contains technical updates to the fourth, fourteenth, twentieth and twenty-first preambular paragraphs, as well as to paragraphs 20 and 21. The updates include references to the General Assembly High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, which was convened virtually by the President of the Assembly on 10 September on the theme “The culture of peace: change our world for the better in the age of COVID-19”, and the Chair’s summary of the meeting. The High-level Forum recognized the relevance of the culture of peace in responding to the unprecedented crisis posed by the pandemic. We thank the sponsoring delegations for their valuable suggestions and advice, and we are grateful to everyone for their understanding and cooperation.

After the successful commemoration last year of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, the draft resolution has returned to its original form. It requests the President of the General Assembly to consider convening a high-level forum on the culture of peace in September 2021. As in previous years, we look forward to working with the Office of the President of the General Assembly to make next year’s event yet another success.

The notion of the culture of peace, which began in 1999 as a modest venture, has over time and with the mandate of the Assembly evolved into a dominant theme, finding larger footprints and recognition in all major United Nations discourses. In the rapidly changing global security scenario, it has proved to be a useful tool to complement the obligations of the Charter of the United Nations for maintaining peace in the world. During this pandemic, when we are seeing rising intolerance, the importance and relevance of the notion has only grown. We hope to overcome the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease by continuing to spread the message of the culture of peace.

As of my last count, 99 countries had joined to co-sponsor the draft resolution. The large number of cross-regional co-sponsors is a demonstration of the unwavering commitment of the international community to the universal appeal of the culture of peace.

Over the past 21 years, the Assembly has endorsed the enduring value of a culture of peace by adopting the flagship draft resolution under this agenda item by consensus, and we expect the same support this year. We sincerely thank those delegations that have already co-sponsored the draft resolution. We look forward to more delegations co-sponsoring from the floor ahead of its adoption.

**Mr. Costa Filho** (Brazil): We are proud to address the General Assembly on behalf of Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Colombia, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and my own country, Brazil, as member countries of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance.

The Alliance is a network of like-minded countries that are fully committed to advancing the freedom of religion or belief around the world, complementing the existing work of the United Nations and other relevant organizations. The work of the Alliance is based on the principle that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. Launched in February, this growing group is composed of 32 States from different regions, whose people follow a wide diversity of faiths and beliefs.

The countries of the Alliance recently held their first annual Ministers’ Forum on 17 November on the

margins of the third Ministerial to Advance Freedom of Religion or Belief, hosted by Poland. We renewed our commitment to a shared vision for advancing the freedom of religion or belief for all in a world in which, as studies indicate, more than 80 per cent of people live in countries with restrictions on the free practice of faith and beliefs.

The freedom of religion or belief is an integral part of the international framework for human rights. It matters, for everyone, everywhere. For that reason, our countries will remain engaged and speak out for the freedom of religion or belief for all, including the right of individuals to hold any belief, or none, to change their religion or belief and to manifest their religion or belief, either alone or in community with others, in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

The Alliance invites Members of the United Nations that are committed to upholding the right to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief to join us in our fight against persecution and hatred. That can only contribute to the promotion of the inherent dignity and worth of all, as well as to fostering a worldwide culture of peace and understanding.

**Ms. Sulaiman** (Brunei Darussalam): I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Brunei Darussalam.

At the outset, ASEAN would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report (A/75/233) under this agenda item. We are pleased to note the significance and scope of the promotion of a culture of peace, interreligious and intercultural dialogue and cooperation undertaken by the Organization.

South-East Asia is a region of more than 640 million people, with a multitude of ethnicities, religions, languages and cultures. The region's rich diversity and peaceful coexistence have enabled unity and harmony for ASEAN since its establishment, 53 years ago. It has a profound understanding of the culture of peace and embraces it as a core value, as enshrined in the Bangkok Declaration of 1967.

In a world with many challenges, ASEAN recognizes the need to institutionalize a culture of prevention in order to address the root causes of violent extremism

and other forms of violence, social issues such as the displacement of populations and destabilizing factors such as poverty and inequality. Therefore, at the thirty-first ASEAN Summit, held in 2017, ASEAN leaders adopted the Declaration on a Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society, which represents an upstream approach to policymaking in order to build a culture of prevention and strengthen resilience in ASEAN.

ASEAN's culture of prevention summarizes six key thrusts — promoting a culture of peace and intercultural understanding, promoting a culture of respect for all, promoting a culture of good governance at all levels, promoting a culture of resilience and care for the environment, promoting a culture of a healthy lifestyle and promoting a culture that supports the values of moderation. With the complementarities between ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as the backdrop, the six thrusts of ASEAN's culture of prevention are well aligned with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on key areas such as education, the empowerment of young people and poverty eradication, among others.

To further implement and realize the Declaration, ASEAN developed a plan of action on the culture of prevention in 2019, which informed outreach campaigns. We believe that those initiatives will contribute towards achieving ASEAN's aspiration for an inclusive, rules-based, people-oriented and people-centred community.

ASEAN's culture of prevention is our contribution to the fuller development of the culture of peace. In promoting that principle, ASEAN has always underscored the importance of international cooperation and multilateralism, both of which have become more important in view of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The plan of action reflects the importance that ASEAN places on multicultural and peace education for young people to further advance the culture of prevention, promote a regional sense of belonging and foster a shared identity. ASEAN's focus on education recognizes that the defence of peace must be constructed in the minds of young people. The plan of action also expresses our dedication to continue upholding the centrality of ASEAN in the evolving regional architecture, as well as to further promote shared values and norms of conduct and principles of

international law governing friendly relations among States, in order to contribute towards maintaining and promoting sustainable and inclusive peace and stability in the region and beyond.

At the international level, ASEAN continues to support the Security Council's women and peace and security agenda, as well as its youth, peace and security agenda. We also support multi-stakeholder initiatives for the active participation of women and young people that foster a culture of peace, such as the ASEAN youth volunteer programme.

This year, ASEAN has shown its commitment to advancing the role of women through the convening of the ASEAN Leaders' Special Session at the thirty-sixth ASEAN Summit on Women's Empowerment in the Digital Age, held on 26 June; the ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Strengthening Women's Role for Sustainable Peace and Security, held on 10 September; the ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit, held on 12 November on the margins of the thirty-seventh ASEAN Summit; and the adoption of the East Asia Summit Leaders' Statement on Women, Peace and Security.

Apart from its work with the United Nations, ASEAN is very much committed to engaging with its dialogue partners and other partners across the globe to promote a culture of peace, security, stability and prosperity through other key instruments, such as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia; the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone; and ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus.

ASEAN welcomes the invaluable role of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue and greater understanding and respect among civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs. We appreciate the role played by Turkey and Spain as co-sponsors of the Alliance and congratulate them and the community of the Group of Friends on the successful convening of the virtual high-level meeting in September, which also marked the fifteenth anniversary of the Alliance.

We further recognize the role of the Alliance in developing the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites and also support its call for mutual respect, which stresses that the freedom of expression and the freedom of religion or belief

are interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing rights rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

ASEAN shares the aspiration of United Nations States Members to achieve global peace, security and prosperity through multilateralism, mutual respect, tolerance, acceptance, reconciliation and upholding the rule of law. Therefore, allow me to reiterate ASEAN's support for resolution 2535 (2020) and the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm ASEAN's commitment to promoting a culture of peace and its readiness to work with partners in the international community and the United Nations towards maintaining global peace and stability, as well as achieving more inclusive and prosperous societies.

**Mr. Mohamed** (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my country's delegation would like to thank the President for convening this meeting, which gives us an opportunity to take stock of our efforts to promote dialogue, understanding and cooperation among religions and cultures and to promote the culture of peace among the nations, peoples and societies of the world. That objective is at the core of purposes and principles of the United Nations. We would like to sincerely thank the delegation of Bangladesh for introducing draft resolution A/75/L.28.

Peace is the foundation for the stability, security and prosperity of peoples. Without peace, there is no stability, prosperity or decent life for humankind. Therefore, the periodic review of this agenda item helps us to take stock of the efforts of the United Nations in an area in which its role is no longer confined to conflict and dispute resolution and de-escalation but is also focused on other approaches to maintaining international peace and security, including the promotion and support of a culture of peace and dialogue among religions and cultures and the denunciation of hate speech and discrimination in all their forms.

We have at our disposal many mechanisms that, if effectively implemented, will help us to establish and promote peace, including the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech and the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites.

We have witnessed many incidents that have proven the necessity of making greater efforts to foster

interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Consideration must be given to the fact that the freedom of opinion should not be a pretext in any way for offensive behaviour towards religions or religious symbols. We stress the importance of not linking any terrorist act with a particular culture or religion. Attempts to promote such irresponsible ideologies lead to more hatred and division, while undermining efforts that should be directed towards overcoming the challenges that we face. They also threaten the safety and security of all.

We stress the importance of the common appeals to religious leaders issued by the Secretary-General, the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, which call for solidarity, tolerance, the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue and the denunciation of all forms of hatred, discrimination and intolerance.

Peace is a sustained commitment to the values of freedom, justice, equality, tolerance and respect for human dignity. It is closely linked to development and Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which stresses the nexus between peace, development and social justice. Therefore, peace is a prerequisite for all and can be achieved only when injustice is addressed along with all forms of discrimination and hate speech. That requires fostering the media in order to realize the goals of tolerance, rapprochement and solidarity.

We should closely monitor the Internet and ensure that it is not misused and utilized as a platform to spread the toxic ideology of extremist groups that seek to radicalize young people with criminal plans. Awareness campaigns must be intensified to fight those destructive trends, given the threat they pose to the future of young people. In that regard, we stress the importance of fostering the important role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Given the harsh conditions that my country is experiencing during the transitional period, we are keen to spread the culture of peace. The Government of National Accord is committed to a peaceful solution as the only option for resolving the crisis in my country. The Government aims to encourage and enable media institutions, as well as writers and journalists, to address confrontational and hate speech. In that context, we welcome and express our satisfaction with the ceasefire agreement that was concluded recently by the 5+5 Joint

Military Commission. In one of its provisions, the agreement states that a committee will be established to address any irresponsible media speech that could underline the national unity and coherence of the Libyan people.

In conclusion, Libya reiterates its readiness to use all its potential to contribute to international efforts towards broadening and strengthening dialogue in order to achieve tolerance and solidarity among nations and end all forms of hatred, discrimination and violence, thereby creating an environment conducive to establishing security and prosperity for future generations.

**Mr. Abd Aziz (Malaysia):** Malaysia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

This year has been a taxing and testing one for humankind. We have heard the difficulties of communities and States in facing the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Initially we were in a state of shock, as we saw the manner and speed with which the COVID-19 virus spread to every corner of the world. That state of shock turned into despair and sorrow as we witnessed the increasing number of deaths, which continue today and are in the millions. We found hope and resolve in ourselves, as humankind came together in a global effort to fight the pandemic. Through unity and multilateralism, we hoped to fight this new common enemy that had emerged.

Nonetheless, when we thought things could not get any worse, we were struck by the increase in racial attacks, xenophobic violence, discrimination and hate speech, exacerbating the COVID-19 situation, which was already appalling. Now not only is health under siege but also peace. We must admit that more needs to be done to halt that old but common enemy.

When Malaysia became the eighty-second member of the United Nations on 17 September 1957, it did so with a sense of duty, pride and honour. It did not matter that our fledgling nation was only less than one month old. Our first Permanent Representative, Tun Dr. Ismail, stated, I quote

“To a small nation such as ours, it is in the moral strength of our people that we shall find the

inspiration to shoulder the responsibility which membership in the United Nations bestows on us”.

The moral strength of Malaysians, our people, is the foundation of Malaysia’s nation-building process. Our moral strength includes embracing differences and peculiarities. It includes learning to love, accept, understand and appreciate the diversity, distinctiveness and uniqueness of others.

We believe in the importance of mutual respect and tolerance and in promoting understanding and acceptance among different groups, faiths and religions. We see ourselves as an example of how different ethnic communities can live in peace and harmony and work together for the progress and well-being of the nation. Those principles are critical foundations that have allowed us to enjoy peace and prosperity as a nation. The same moral compass that has guided our nation-building process throughout the years guides us in our relations with the global community. We have also learned to love and embrace the diversity, distinctiveness and uniqueness of the nation States that make up the global community. It is the same ideas and knowledge that we have shared with our people for the common good of the nation that we are now sharing with the global community.

Malaysia is fully supportive of, and strongly committed to, fostering a global culture of respect for peace and non-violence, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion, in which human values, human rights and dignity are truly celebrated. Our success in nation-building is not only premised on the moral strength of our people but also on the advancements and empowerment of human rights and the rule of law. The holistic approach of human rights not only focuses on fundamental freedoms and the liberation of people, as enshrined in the Malaysian Constitution, but also in ensuring a balance in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The simple fostering of human rights without any check or balance of any kind has both a positive and a negative side. For the enjoyment of rights per se is not an end in itself. All people should understand that the rights that are conferred come with responsibility. If not, we would not only reap the positive benefits of human rights but also face the unwanted growth of the negative effects of unchecked rights.

Malaysia believes in the constellation of human rights. If rights are not promoted and protected in

a balanced manner, or if one right is pursued more than others, then all other rights and freedoms suffer an eclipse. Human rights and fundamental freedoms must complement one another. Rights should not be in competition with one another, and neither should one right be seen as superior to another. The freedom of expression, for example, should not usurp the freedom of belief, or vice versa.

The promotion and protection of human rights in a balanced manner is not without challenges. For the challenge we face nationally also remains a challenge faced in this institution. We must admit the hard truth and reality that there have been instances in which some delegations have advocated or pushed one right over another. We must work together to address that and find mutual respect and understanding among Member States.

It is important that we rise beyond hate and fear and continue in our resolve to further enhance positive interaction among nations and peoples of diverse cultures and values. We need closer collaboration among all Member States in exploring ways to further strengthen the culture of peace by the sharing of experiences and best practices in enhancing cohesion among individuals, communities and nations. We must not allow irresponsible individuals or groups to take advantage of a world facing despair as a result of a pandemic and continue to spread racism, hate speech, religious discrimination and xenophobia unchecked.

It is also important that we recommit ourselves to the basic principles of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which was adopted by the General Assembly in September 1999. The international community should strengthen its ongoing efforts to promote a culture of peace and effectively implement the Programme of Action. We welcome the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech and call for its implementation. Malaysia also commends the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in promoting intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation.

As we continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and build back better, let us not forget that the quest for peace is for our people and the global community. We must end the rise in racism, hate speech and religious discrimination, as well as the siege against peace. We must be united in addressing and facing that threat. To that end, we must be steadfast in the cause of peace,

human rights and justice. The preservation of harmony and peace, whether nationally or globally, is not easy. But we must do what is right, not what is easy, as to abandon such a cause is not an option.

Let me conclude by affirming Malaysia's full commitment to our common goals of achieving a sustainable, peaceful and prosperous world through the promotion of a culture of peace.

**Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the presentation of draft resolutions A/75/L.28 and A/75/L.36/Rev.1, under agenda item 15, "Culture of peace", which were co-sponsored by Venezuela. The draft resolutions refer to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, interreligious and intercultural dialogue and the safeguarding of religious sites. We again commend the delegations of Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia for their historic leadership at the helm of such initiatives.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has once again demonstrated not only the fragility of the human race but also how much work remains to be done in terms of building robust and universal health-care systems. The challenges facing us in this crisis compel us to renew our international partnership so that it ensures that cooperation and resources, without exceptions, prevail over political interests, since such an emergency can be overcome only by humankind working together as a whole. It is a timely opportunity to honour the memory of the victims of the disease and pay tribute to the heroes and heroines, the front-line workers, who have done their utmost to deal with the ravages of the pandemic.

Despite that situation of uncertainty and turmoil, there are those that use their influence to threaten the stability and peace of other nations, making political use of a global health emergency. That goes as far as the imposition of unilateral coercive measures by the current Government of the United States of America and some of its partners, which prevent our country from having access to financial systems, steal public resources and stop us from buying medicines, medical treatments, diagnostic tests, food and fuel. That amounts to collective punishment, a crime against humanity, which affects the entire Venezuelan people, particularly the poorest. The strategy has failed to achieve its goals but has left a trail of sorrow with often irreversible consequences. We once again condemn and deplore those acts of economic terrorism, which

represent crimes against humanity under article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and we demand that they be lifted immediately.

Throughout its recent history, Venezuela has always actively promoted peace and solidarity with genuine and concrete actions. That has been affirmed by sisterly nations and the international community, including even amid the ongoing attacks and threats.

The various approaches for Latin American and Caribbean integration, including at the intercontinental level, and the mainstreaming of democratic and participatory mechanisms in decision-making and ownership among historically forgotten sectors of our country, such as women, young people, indigenous peoples and persons of African descent, ensure stability amid the unequal distribution of wealth and the social exclusion that has taken root.

We reaffirm our strong belief that the policies of inclusion and social development for all on the basis of the framework provided to us by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals are the way to move forward towards a world of peace and genuine justice based on respectful coexistence among nations, even with our differences. We have that duty to future generations.

Venezuela reiterates its support for the call made by the Secretary-General at the start of the pandemic to put an end to hostilities across the globe and to use the opportunity provided by the crisis to put an end to armed conflicts throughout the world. We strongly believe that peace can be achieved through diplomacy, multilateralism and a genuine commitment on the part of national Governments. Humankind has proved that to us in the past and can do so again today.

**Mr. Al Zadjali** (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Sultanate of Oman, I would like very much to thank the President for this opportunity to address the topic of a culture of peace, which is a key priority for the Government of my country. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the report of the Secretary-General (A/75/233) on the promotion of a culture of peace around the world.

Peace is the greatest blessing. It gives nations stability and encourages cooperation among States. The Charter of the United Nations affirms the importance of peace. It urges States to adopt policies in support

of peace and to establish good-neighbourly relations, while refraining from interference in the internal affairs of other States and fostering a spirit of coexistence, tolerance and cooperation.

Based on our conviction and the Sultanate of Oman's belief in the importance of peace, we made the promotion of peace a key element of our foreign policy and a noble goal that we are striving to achieve through our relations with all States. The Sultanate of Oman will always support peace and the culture of peace with all its values and noble principles that encourage States to reject violence, refrain from the use of force and resolve disputes peacefully.

In that context, allow me to recall the speech by His Majesty Sultan Bin Tarik of Oman on 23 February, when he said:

“Oman's message of peace will continue to go forth in the world, carrying a great heritage and noble goals, building and not demolishing, approaching and not distancing.”

However, peace will be achieved not through words but through acts that are in line with international values, principles and norms, in a way that does not contradict the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

I would like to conclude by saying that the delegation of my country, the Sultanate of Oman, is ready to work with the President and all delegations of Member States to achieve the desired purposes and principles, at the forefront of which is spreading peace and promoting it through actions and words.

**Mr. Mohammad** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my country's delegation would like to express its sincere thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his report entitled “Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace” (A/75/233).

The increasingly complex and interconnected challenges that we face have significantly worsened in an unprecedented way this year, with the effects of the threat posed by the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which transcends borders and does not differentiate between developing and developed countries. The pandemic has had a negative impact on all aspects of our lives — health, economic, social and political — and is now the greatest challenge facing the world since the Second World War. It has also revealed an increase in the forms of racism, hate

speech and discrimination. Such phenomena, which have emerged with the spread of the virus, are of great concern, as are other phenomena from which we have all suffered for a number of years, such as intolerance, violent extremism and religious and sectarian tension.

All those challenges undermine and threaten the spread of a culture of peace in our societies. Such behaviours are due to a lack of respect for the opinions of other people, intolerance, a growing rhetoric of exclusion and lack of awareness of peaceful coexistence. We all must therefore pool our efforts at the international, regional and national levels so that we can transform a culture of hatred, intolerance and conflict into a culture of dialogue, peaceful coexistence and peace, particularly in view of the unprecedented health crisis facing us.

In that regard, we reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's call in March for a ceasefire in all parts of the world that are experiencing armed conflict in order to focus on the real struggle of our lives — the fight against COVID-19.

The Secretary-General's report also refers to many issues in the context of promoting a culture of peace that are ambitious and noble goals, which require greater cooperation in order to achieve them. Such issues encompass addressing hate speech, including on the Internet, preventing attacks on religious sites, promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and ensuring respect for human rights and support for peacebuilding efforts. We reaffirm what the Secretary-General's report mentions with regard to the importance of the role of women and young people in promoting a culture of peace. In that context, we emphasize the importance of empowering them and their participation in all areas, including political processes.

A commitment to peace is a *sine qua non* in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16, which seeks to promote peaceful and inclusive societies. In that context, we affirm that there will be no lasting peace without development and no development without lasting peace, as the two elements are closely related.

On the other hand, we renew the position of the State of Kuwait, which condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations whatever its motives. It is a criminal act that can never be justified, and should not be linked to any religion, nationality, culture or ethnic group. We also affirm the need to put an end

to defamation of all heavenly religions in both official and political speeches, which will only increase hatred, hostility and racism among peoples.

The culture of peace is deeply rooted in my country. The Kuwaiti Constitution states in one of its articles that “Peace is the aim of the State”. A spirit of tolerance, acceptance of others and dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations has been deeply rooted in the history of Kuwaiti society for hundreds of years. In our modern era, those values have been translated into a Constitution that ensures the freedoms of opinion, expression and belief and the right to practise religion in all freedom and safety.

In conclusion, my country’s delegation affirms its readiness to participate in all regional and international efforts to promote a culture of peace, foster dialogue among civilizations, spread the values of moderation, tolerance and mutual respect and reject extremism, hatred and violence in all their forms and manifestations. We urge all Member States to cooperate and work in a unified manner through our international multilateral system and the United Nations — an Organization that was established to embrace and strengthen dialogue as a constant principle in international relations in pursuit of peace and to build bridges of cooperation and communication among nations and peoples.

**Ms. Wong** (Singapore): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/75/233) on actions undertaken by Member States and the United Nations system to promote a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue. We also thank the delegations of Bangladesh, the Philippines, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Morocco for their respective initiatives under this agenda item.

Singapore aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/75/PV.32). We would like to add the following points in our national capacity.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has highlighted vulnerabilities, inequalities and increasing intolerance and social tensions in many countries. In the face of that complex and multidimensional threat, it is now more important than ever to work towards a culture of peace as the essential foundation of multilateralism and global and regional cooperation. As the Secretary-General states in his report, the commitment to peace is critical for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development, particularly in the current global context.

Singapore believes that strengthening social cohesion by building bonds of trust and understanding that bridge racial, social and cultural differences is key to a more peaceful and stable global environment. To promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, Singapore hosted the inaugural International Conference on Cohesive Societies in 2019. More than 1,000 delegates from some 40 countries discussed the issues surrounding faith, identity and cohesion and pledged to safeguard religious harmony across the globe. Those kinds of conversations are important in forging stronger interfaith understanding and developing new ways to foster greater harmony in societies.

As stated in article 10, paragraph 4, of the Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War, education is one of the principal means of building a culture of peace. In Singapore, we believe that it is important to teach children from a very young age about respect for, and the understanding of, other religions, cultures and ethnic groups. Multiracialism and the importance of racial harmony are taught as compulsory subjects in school. Students learn about cultural diversity and issues related to living in multicultural Singapore, such as racial and religious sensitivities, in both the past and the present. We hope that this will shape the values, attitudes and behaviour of our young people so that they become responsible global citizens who will advocate for more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies in our increasingly interconnected world.

Singapore will continue to work with all United Nations Members to promote a greater intercultural and interreligious understanding. We also reaffirm our commitment to supporting multilateralism and the work of the United Nations in fostering a global culture of peace.

Amid the growing turbulence in many parts of the world and the threats brought about by COVID-19, it is timely to renew our collective commitment to fostering a culture of peace. It is only through peace that our countries and our peoples can focus on building back better and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the President for convening this meeting. I

also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/75/233).

The international community renewed its commitment to peace in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 75/1), which sends a clear message to unite around the promotion of a culture of peace with the aim of building a generation that supports peace and peaceful coexistence and respects all religions and cultures so that everyone can live in peace and security.

It is of concern to see that inflammatory rhetoric has taken a dangerous turn with the increasing institutional and systematic calls for the repeated targeting of more than 2 billion Muslims around the world through deliberate attacks on their religious symbols. Consequently, the State of Qatar condemns the significant escalation in populist rhetoric that incites hatred against religions. We categorically reject all forms of hate speech based on belief, race or religion.

In affirmation of the State of Qatar's commitment to implementing the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, and since we believe that achieving peace at the national and international levels requires focusing all our efforts to realize sustainable development, ensure respect for human rights, the rule of law and gender equality, fight terrorism and combat extremism and corruption, my country has strengthened its capabilities for establishing and promoting peace by adopting an impartial and reliable foreign policy as well as embracing positive and balanced relations.

In the context of benefiting from the trust placed in the policy of the State of Qatar at the international level, my country has worked towards preventing and resolving disputes peacefully through mediation and preventive diplomacy as tools for achieving peace in accordance with Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. The efforts made by my country have contributed to the peaceful settlement of a number of disputes, most recently through the facilitation and hosting of the Afghan peace negotiations in Doha, which was welcomed by the Security Council.

Demonstrating such a commitment to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace entails distancing ourselves from policies that undermine the efforts of the international community to promote peace and security. Accordingly, the creation of crises and the spread of hatred among peoples

undermine the efforts of the international community to promote a culture of peace. Likewise, the violation of the sovereignty of States, interference in their internal affairs and disrespect for the rule of law and human rights contradict the endeavours of the international community to promote a culture of peace.

The continued unjust blockade imposed on the State of Qatar for more than three years is a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, which calls on all States to refrain from fuelling disputes and to resolve them through dialogue in line with the provisions of international law and the Charter.

In conclusion, we reaffirm the commitment of the State of Qatar to actively participate in the international efforts to promote a culture of peace, spread the values of moderation and tolerance while rejecting hatred, violence and extremism in all its forms.

**Mr. Pedroso Cuesta** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The year that is coming to an end has been marked by the unprecedented impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has added new challenges and highlighted other problems already facing the international community. With its devastating effects, the pandemic has demonstrated the inequality of the international order in which we live, which prioritizes rich countries and perpetuates the deprivation of the poor. It favours inequality, poverty and hunger in a world with all the necessary wealth, expertise and technologies in an unsustainable paradox and supports unilateralism.

In the midst of a pandemic that is far from diminishing, we have seen the increased application of unilateral coercive measures, which run counter to the Charter of the United Nations and international law and further undermine the ability of affected countries to deal with COVID-19. At the same time, we have witnessed the prevailing selfishness among some of the richest nations, which have unleashed their competitive spirit in order to secure for themselves the medicines and technologies needed to respond to the pandemic, while ignoring the fact that we live in an interconnected world and the pandemic is a global problem that we all should resolve. As always, such competition will harm only the countries of the South. The situation of the pandemic has also been used by some, such as the United States, to promote racist and xenophobic ideas, which will lead only to confrontation, and to withdraw from the World Health Organization.

Apart from COVID-19, none of the phenomena I have mentioned are new. Inequality, exclusion, unilateralism, a lack of solidarity, and intolerance are the same problems that hamper greater progress in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. There can be no peace without economic and social development. Justice and equality for all need to prevail within and among countries. Neither can there be peace or the promotion of such a culture without strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in particular the prevention of the use or threat of use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, respect for sovereignty and self-determination.

We cannot advance a culture of peace, a goal that Cuba shares, while we continue to promote supremacist, racist and xenophobic ideas that are not based on science or morally unacceptable. A world of peace will remain an elusive ideal until we prioritize multilateralism and respect our legitimate differences.

Cuba is well aware of the value of peace and the importance of promoting an environment that fosters such a culture. For six decades, we have had to deal with the effects of the criminal financial, trade and economic

blockade imposed by the United States, which are exacerbated amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as its acts of non-conventional war and aggressive policies against our people. Nevertheless, to date we have remained fully committed to peace and will continue to support the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, as well as the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, adopted in Havana in 2014 at the second Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

In line with that commitment, Cuba decided to join the Group of Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. We are convinced that the promotion of a culture of peace is the way to achieve a fairer and more sustainable world.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker for this meeting. We will hear the remaining speakers tomorrow, Wednesday, 2 December, after the consideration of the agenda items “Question of Palestine” and “The situation in the Middle East”.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 15.

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*