



# General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

**66**<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
Tuesday, 18 May 2021, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

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

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Masuku (Eswatini), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

## Agenda item 135 (continued)

### The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity

#### Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/863)

#### Draft resolution (A/75/L.82)

**Ms. Kadare** (Albania): At the outset, I would like to thank the members of the core group for initiating and bringing forward draft resolution A/75/L.82. As a sponsor of the draft resolution, Albania strongly supports an annual discussion in the General Assembly on the responsibility to protect (R2P) and welcomes the regular reporting of the Secretary-General on the issue. In his future reports, the Secretary-General could include an assessment of the implementation of the recommendations contained in his previous reports, as well as of the risk of atrocity crimes and the response of United Nations actors. The recommendations should provide clear, action-oriented guidelines on how to improve the prevention of atrocity crimes.

The responsibility to protect is a core principle in the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law, as well as in the prevention of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing. In our region, the Balkans, we have witnessed first-hand

the vital importance of the international community's engagement in ensuring peace. It was thanks to the NATO intervention in Kosovo 22 years ago that the dictator Slobodan Milošević was forced to end his ethnic cleansing campaign against the Albanian population in Kosovo. To this day, Kosovo Albanians are grateful that someone stood up for them before it was too late.

The international community has often reacted too late, ignoring early warnings and choosing indifference or inaction over upholding the norms, laws and principles that safeguard humankind. That is why we need a special focus on prevention, stopping mass atrocities before they happen and protecting people before they are forced to flee from crimes that are a collective stain on the conscience of humankind.

Over the past year, we have witnessed how the global pandemic has exacerbated conflicts, created new social tensions and increased the risk of atrocity crimes. We therefore support the efforts of the Secretary-General to prioritize atrocity prevention and R2P. In addition, we support the work of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect and encourage them to share their analyses of emerging crises with the wider United Nations membership in order to provide early warning, as well as to share their recommendations with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. We encourage the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect to speak loudly and boldly when it needs to, which, after all, is what early warning and atrocity prevention are all about. Silence only encourages and assists the

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perpetrators. The protection and promotion of human rights are clearly linked to conflict prevention and early warning. If Albania is elected to the Security Council in June for the period from 2022 to 2023, we will work closely with all like-minded countries to increase the synergies between the Security Council and the Human Rights Council.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that at a time when 80 million people are displaced by persecution, conflict and atrocities, the international community must do more to uphold its responsibility to protect. Albania believes that sovereignty entails responsibility and that wherever and whenever vulnerable populations are threatened by mass atrocities, the international community must respond not just with declarations but with timely and decisive action. That is why Albania believes that the adoption of the draft resolution will help to further institutionalize R2P within the United Nations system, avoiding procedural complications and duplications so that we can focus on how we can assist those who need us and protect them from atrocity crimes. That is the promise that was made at the World Summit 15 years ago and the promise that we need to uphold for the sake of our human community.

**Mr. Tito** (Kiribati): I should not be speaking in this debate, as someone from the Pacific who is used to a very peaceful way of life in our community and on our islands with our neighbours, where we have already established a practice of working together as one happy family. The Biketawa Declaration, which was adopted back in 2000, is one of the tools we used to that end. I was there, in my humble country of Kiribati, chairing that meeting, which was about something similar to the responsibility to protect (R2P).

However, the R2P that I am hearing about today is rather more sophisticated and complicated. I can understand that there is noise coming from all four corners of the globe, questioning what this form of R2P is. I am among those asking what R2P is going to do. Is it something that we are already practicing in our Pacific family through the Biketawa Declaration, which was agreed on by the Pacific leaders at the Pacific Islands Forum in 2000? The Biketawa Declaration is the R2P of the Pacific, and I would invite Member States to study it.

I was a part of that process and one of the people questioning the draft. Should we work together when a State is in trouble? When one of our neighbours needs

help, should we all meet and decide what we should be doing? Should we bring all our police and our militaries and settle the issue on the ground? We knew that it would not be a good idea to interfere in the sovereignty of States. That was also one of the challenges back then. I can hear the voices coming from all over the world, with different people reaching out and asking questions. It is confusing.

But I can understand why there is confusion out there, because the history there is different. The Pacific has never experienced the events that Europe and some other continents have gone through. We thank our Lord God for creating the Pacific that way. We hope that the whole world can be like the Pacific and do things the way we do. We respect each other. We would never dare interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, but the Biketawa Declaration teaches us that when a sovereign nation is in trouble beyond its capacity, it can call on its neighbours and its neighbours will come with whatever they have to help settle a problem that is too large or complex for that Government and its people to handle. I therefore hope that there is a lesson to be learned here. It may be a small lesson, but it is nonetheless a fundamental and very principled one. If R2P were produced in the same way as the Biketawa Declaration, I am sure that the world would be a better place and we would have a tool that works well for everyone.

**Mrs. Barba Bustos** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the President for convening this plenary meeting on a topic of such great importance, which requires serious and exhaustive analysis in the General Assembly. I also want to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the subject (A/75/863).

In 2005, Ecuador supported the adoption of resolution 60/1, endorsing by consensus the outcome document of the World Summit, which clearly set out the three pillars that should underpin the concept of the responsibility to protect. My country has remained steadfast ever since in its defence in every area of its constitutional principles, which are aimed at ensuring the basic elements of coexistence and the importance of full respect for human rights, along with States' obligation to fight to achieve and comply with them.

It has been clearly shown that the conflicts that have emerged around the world are linked to situations of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion and cannot be resolved merely through the use of force, which is why we emphasize that preventing conflicts

by using peaceful means to settle disputes is the best way to avoid the commission of atrocity crimes.

With regard to accountability, we want to highlight the role of the International Criminal Court in maintaining international peace and justice and defending the rule of law. It is also an essential component in the prevention of conflicts and providing reparations to victims of the most serious crimes. We therefore reiterate our support for the Court as a mechanism uniquely placed to fight against impunity and we call on all States that have not yet done so to join the Rome Statute in order to ensure its universality.

We want to affirm our confidence in the role played by regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention. In that connection, we consider early-warning systems crucial to avoiding deteriorating situations in countries and to preventing crises and outbreaks of violence that affect the civilian population, which is generally the most vulnerable.

We reiterate that it is our belief that the three pillars of the concept of the responsibility to protect must be observed in accordance with good governance and in chronological order, always prioritizing the responsibility of each State to protect its population and the responsibility of the international community to assist them in doing so. We understand that the third pillar and the possible use of force must be used only in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort and can be applied only through a Security Council resolution in line with Chapters VI and VII of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as other relevant norms and principles enshrined in it.

On 30 November 2018, Ecuador endorsed the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group code of conduct for guiding the response of the Security Council in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, and on 9 December 2019 we endorsed the Franco-Mexican initiative on limiting the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocity crimes.

For the Government of Ecuador, the responsibility to protect is not a matter to be taken lightly. While its concept is based on a humanitarian act, it is also true that it must be not implemented under premises that undermine the sovereignty of States. As we have pointed out on other occasions, only the General Assembly has the legal capacity and authority to advance a consensus-based definition of the responsibility to protect and, in particular, to set out the conceptual, institutional and

political dimensions of implementing that principle. While the responsibility to protect is a concept that still warrants greater analysis by Member States, Ecuador therefore believes that its inclusion on the Assembly's agenda represents an opportunity to discuss it with greater intensity and political commitment, in a constructive and transparent manner. We must avoid politicizing a dialogue that would hinder the protection of civilians in any place where genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity may be committed.

**Mr. Rugeles** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (A/75/863) and appreciates the convening of this valuable debate. Colombia not only supports draft resolution A/75/L.82 but has also joined the long list of States that have sponsored it. Our commitment to the principle of the responsibility to protect is unwavering. Colombia is a country that respects international law and is a staunch defender of multilateralism and dialogue as tools to resolve differences. We are a State with a long and recognized democratic history in our region and we protect and defend the rights of our population. We have a clear separation of public powers and our citizens can wholeheartedly trust that their institutions will guarantee their rights. That is why we firmly believe in the values that underlie the principle of the responsibility to protect.

The Government of Colombia feels it is necessary to respond to certain assertions that were made yesterday in this Hall with regard to its actions and the situation in the country (see A/75/PV.65). The illegitimate regime in Venezuela irresponsibly accused my country of tolerating the commission of crimes on its territory, as well as alleged actions outside international law, and I want to categorically reject those false and biased claims. Colombia does not recognize the illegitimate regime led by Nicolás Maduro, and the assertions made by his representative were aimed solely at calling into question the reality of Colombia's situation and our democratic spirit. They sought to distract attention from their own internal situation, which features a failed State, a multidimensional crisis, the breakdown of democratic order and the suffering of a people mired in poverty who are crying out day after day for their freedom, human rights and protection. Venezuela's illegitimate regime is attempting to confuse and mislead with its rhetoric, as well as to find a way to voice its antagonism to the draft resolution under

consideration, thereby shirking its responsibility to protect its population.

Colombia has always acted and will always act within the framework of our Constitution and international law. We consider it a priority to work to prevent all mass atrocities. States must focus on protecting their populations so as to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. For all these reasons, we affirm our unshakeable commitment to international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and to the principle of the responsibility to protect in particular.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/75/L.82. Before giving the floor for explanations of vote or position before the vote, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

**Mr. Elgharib** (Egypt): Notwithstanding the fundamental responsibility of Member States to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, as enshrined in numerous international human rights instruments, we believe that the notion of the responsibility to protect (R2P) still contains several political and legal gaps that if ignored would do more harm than good with regard to the principle's universal acceptance. It is therefore essential that we strive to achieve consensus on the conceptual framework of the principle before continuing to mainstream R2P across the United Nations system. We believe that such clarifications are an essential prerequisite before we can include R2P on the formal agenda of the General Assembly or take any practical steps regarding the operationalization of the concept, including in the area of accountability. In that regard, we would like to reaffirm Egypt's steadfast and unwavering commitment to preventing impunity and ensuring accountability for violations of international humanitarian law.

We believe that the primary responsibility to protect populations from such crimes rests with Member States. In that regard, the principal role of the international community should focus on enabling and assisting States in developing their capacities to carry out those responsibilities, while respecting the principle of national ownership regarding the policies and programmes pursued. The international

community should therefore focus on preventive diplomacy and prevention. While we fully endorse the view that prevention lies at the core of the responsibility to protect, we believe that there should be a holistic and comprehensive approach to R2P, one not limited solely to military or security aspects but capable of being interpreted more broadly so as to address the root causes of conflicts, including foreign occupation, poverty alleviation, food insecurity, environmental degradation and religious and ethnic discrimination and intolerance.

In conclusion, while we will vote against draft resolution A/75/L.82 for the reasons mentioned earlier, Egypt asserts its unwavering commitment to the international norms pertaining to the protection of populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. We will continue to strive to reach a consensus on all outstanding aspects of R2P in a manner that would address the concerns of Member States, while providing more effective protection to populations on the ground against such crimes, as well as addressing the numerous concerns that many delegations have expressed today and yesterday (see A/75/PV.64 and A/75/PV.65) as to the potential misuse, abuse and selectivity of the application of the principle under discussion.

**Mr. Proskuryakov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Thanks to major diplomatic efforts, the elements of the concept of the responsibility to protect populations against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity were formulated in general terms in the 2005 World Summit outcome document (resolution 60/1). It is well known that the consensus reached then was difficult and fragile. The text of the World Summit document also envisaged further discussion of the issue. That was what was behind the adoption of an informal interactive dialogue as the only appropriate format acceptable to all. The reasons for that are quite understandable, including as they do the sensitive nature of the issues under discussion, the polarized positions on it, States' disagreement about a broader interpretation and, lastly, serious disputes with regard to the concept's applicability.

Unfortunately, however, the lack of unanimity on the issue did not prevent some States from putting the concept into practice according to their own interpretation of it. The consequences of such humanitarian operations, which are supposedly intended to lessen the suffering of civilian populations,

are well known to all — illegal armed intervention, regime change, the destruction of statehood and economic collapse. However, rather than learning from their mistakes and striving to reach a consensus that takes account of the increased contradictions, they are once again attempting to formalize the process.

We feel compelled to remind the Assembly of an important detail. Four years ago, the representatives of the group of countries promoting the concept publicly assured the General Assembly and every delegation that the proposal before them was for debate only during the seventy-second session. Nevertheless, they broke their own promises by taking similar steps at the seventy-third and seventy-fourth sessions. On both occasions the item was forced onto the agenda by a vote.

The divisions of the General Assembly on the issue continue today. We are being asked to include it as a standing item on the agenda and request a report from the Secretary-General. As we have already said, such an approach not only breaks promises made to the Assembly, but also worsens tensions and puts the Secretary-General in a difficult position by requiring him to deliver a report on a controversial topic on which we do not have consensus. My delegation will therefore vote against draft resolution A/75/L.82, and we urge others to do the same.

**Mrs. Llano** (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation believes that the so-called responsibility to protect is a concept that does not enjoy consensus and is a matter of increasingly serious concern for many countries, especially small and developing ones. As past experience has shown, it is the civilian population that is the worst affected in the countries involved. Since 2013, the world has witnessed invasions, coups d'état, military aggression and foreign campaigns aimed at overthrowing legitimately established Governments, all of them carried out in the name of the responsibility to protect. Such acts of aggression have led to chaos, death and destruction.

Nicaragua will continue to stand firmly with the international community and the United Nations against the commission of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We would like to remind the Assembly of the continuing serious concern that we see in the manipulation of the concept of the responsibility to protect by powerful countries and the actions of interventionists, however disguised, that in various ways attempt to justify interference and

the use of force to destabilize and replace legitimately elected Governments. The delegation of Nicaragua will vote against draft resolution A/75/L.82, on the inclusion of this item on the annual agenda of the General Assembly, and we hope for the understanding and support of other delegations.

**Mr. Taufan** (Indonesia): My delegation will vote against draft resolution A/75/L.82 for three reasons. First, the responsibility to protect (R2P) does not need to be a standing annual agenda item. Since 2009, many debates have taken place and many reports of the Secretary-General have been discussed in this Hall, all of them possible because they are mandated and encouraged by the 2005 World Summit outcome document (resolution 60/1).

Secondly, any proposal or idea that seeks to enrich the discussion on this concept should not derail the parameters outlined in the World Summit document. Such efforts should not loosen, expand or create thresholds or criteria other than those prescribed under resolution 60/1. Discussions of R2P must not turn the concept into something that it is not. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Over the years, the divergent views expressed in this Hall and the contentious implementation of R2P have further demonstrated that greater caution is indeed necessary.

Thirdly, Indonesia's vote today should not be taken to be a vote against R2P as a concept. Indeed, in 2005, Indonesia joined the consensus that adopted the R2P concept pursuant to resolution 60/1. The principles and norms that underlie R2P are not alien to Indonesia, nor are they specific only to certain or particular groups of States or regions. In that context, strengthening a country's normative prevention framework at the national level is critical. It is a corollary to the principle that the primary responsibility to protect populations lies with the States concerned. In fact, as a representative of Indonesia has stated,

“In our view, within — and specifically within — the framework of the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, [the so-called] three pillars are solid enough to withstand any and every assault” (*A/63/PV.97, p.8*).

Lastly, I would like to conclude by taking this opportunity to thank Ambassador Ivan Šimonović and his team, as well as the core group, for their frank engagement on draft resolution A/75/L.82.

**Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore): I am taking the floor to explain our vote on draft resolution A/75/L.82, on including an annual agenda item on the responsibility to protect (R2P) and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Singapore will abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

Singapore has been a member of the Group of Friends on the Responsibility to Protect since its establishment, because we have always attached importance to greater dialogue and discussion among Member States on the concept of R2P, as well as the issue of preventing atrocity crimes, genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We believe that it is incumbent on us as members to build trust and find common ground on such important and difficult issues.

However, we regard this draft resolution as a mistake and a missed opportunity. In our view, it is a mistake to believe that by adopting it we will be able to avoid the deep differences that have characterized previous discussions on the issue of R2P. And it represents a missed opportunity because it imposes an annual agenda item on all Member States without making any effort to build understanding on the concept of R2P. It is also a missed opportunity to build trust with all Member States, especially those that have a different view of the concept of R2P.

It is clear to us that trust on this issue has been broken. Four years ago, at the start of the seventy-second session, when the inclusion of the item on the Assembly's agenda was first proposed, the proponents provided clear assurances that their request for the inclusion of this agenda item would be a one-off, and that it would be included only on the agenda of the seventy-second session. We were therefore surprised that the agenda item was then introduced subsequently at the seventy-third, seventy-fourth and seventy-fifth sessions. And now it has been introduced as an annual item. What was promised as a one-time agenda item will now become an annual item, and that is what I mean when I say that there is a need to build trust — or, should I say, rebuild trust — and find common ground.

There is no doubt that the concept of R2P continues to deeply divide Member States. In that context, it is more important to build trust and confidence through an informal process of dialogue and discussion rather than a formal debate in the General Assembly. I want

to make it clear that my delegation is not against a dialogue or even an annual discussion. However, it is our view that a formal debate with a formal agenda item often results in public statements of national positions that are not always conducive to bridging differences and finding common ground. The reality is that there is a long road ahead of us in terms of building trust and understanding among the proponents of the draft resolution and other Member States. We can only hope that if it becomes an annual agenda item, it will not become an occasion for posturing and a ritual discussion on this very difficult and important issue.

Let me conclude with the final point that any dialogue or discussion on the concept of R2P must of course be based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and be conducted on a basis of mutual respect and understanding with sensitivity to the deep differences between Member States' views.

**Ms. Guardia González** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba is taking the floor in explanation of our vote on draft resolution A/75/L.82, on the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Ensuring a response from the international community aimed at preventing acts of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity is a goal that Cuba shares. However, it is well known that certain States have manipulated the so-called concept of the responsibility to protect to impose interventionist agendas and attempts at regime change that have had dire consequences for the countries concerned. The differences of opinion on the issue that persist even today among Member States are many and were clearly expressed during discussions in the Assembly at its seventy-second session.

The introduction of draft resolution A/75/L.82 deepens divisions within the Assembly in its attempt to impose an agenda item that does not enjoy consensus. We continue to believe that including the responsibility to protect as an annual agenda item is premature. We encourage delegations to reflect on the danger posed by the adoption of the draft resolution when profound gaps remain on issues such as who decides when it is necessary to protect; who determines that a State is failing to protect its population; who and what criteria determine the measures to be taken; and how we prevent the issue from being used as a justification for a supposed and non-existent right to intervene, in

clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations. For that reason, my delegation will vote against the draft resolution.

**Mr. Warraich** (Pakistan): My delegation has asked for the floor to explain our vote on draft resolution A/75/L.82, entitled “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”.

For an issue that provokes such divergent views on its nature, scope and application, we believe that the purpose of our discussion should be a sincere effort to bridge the substantive nature of the differences, positions and perspectives, not about how to determine the format for holding the discussions. In fact, an excessive focus on institutionalizing this debate — as has been the case during the past few sessions of the General Assembly — will accentuate divisions, undermine mutual trust and risk eroding the existing global consensus on atrocity crimes, as affirmed in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit outcome document (resolution 60/1). We should prevent that backslide.

Recently there has been a renewed global spotlight on the issue of protection, in particular owing to the situation in Palestine. It is also in Palestine that the failure of the international community to uphold those norms has been most evident. With the killing fields of the occupied Palestinian territories drenched in the blood of more than 200 Palestinians, including women and children, the Security Council has been a silent bystander in the face of the plight of the long-suffering Palestinian people. The inaction of the Security Council is due not to the inadequacy of any legal norms in preventing egregious crimes but rather a lack of political will to action on the part of some. Against that backdrop, calls for accountability invariably smack of double standards and selectivity, especially when egregious crimes, including mass killings, deliberate and prolonged lockdowns in military sieges of entire populations and systematic attempts to impose new demographic realities in Palestine and other occupied territories are committed in full view of the international community. Such violations can easily spiral into genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity in the absence of international scrutiny and accountability.

What is needed is not an abdication of the collective responsibility to prevent those crimes, but consistent

and uniform action carried out objectively and impartially against all transgressions, wherever they are committed and by whomever. That is the standard against which any initiative on the responsibility to protect must be calibrated. In view of the persistent lack of consensus among the wider membership, we believe that any precipitous action would harden their differences and make their positions drift further apart. In view of that, my delegation will abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.82, entitled “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”. I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/75/L.82: Andorra, Bangladesh, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, the Niger, Paraguay, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu.

**The Acting President:** A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco,

Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yemen

*Against:*

Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burundi, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe

*Abstaining:*

Algeria, Angola, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Mali, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam

*Draft resolution A/75/L.82 was adopted by 115 votes to 15, with 28 abstentions (resolution 75/277).*

[Subsequently, the delegation of Zambia informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

**The Acting President:** The exercise of the right of reply has been requested. I would like to remind members that statements in the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mrs. Pejić-Glymph (Serbia):** The delegation of Serbia would like to respond to some remarks by the representative of Albania.

The region of the Balkans was indeed the stage for a tragic conflict in the 1990s, in which there were victims on all sides, regardless of their ethnic or religious background. I would like to remind the Assembly that NATO's intervention, 22 years ago,

against a sovereign State, the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was done without the authorization of the Security Council. That is one example of how the concept of the responsibility to protect can be used as a pretext to launch a military intervention against a sovereign and independent State. I also want to remind representatives that no one was held accountable for the killing of 2,500 civilians during the NATO intervention.

On the occasion this past March marking the day of remembrance of the NATO aggression, the President of Serbia, Mr. Aleksandar Vučić, said, among other things, that one child per day, and a little more than that, was the most difficult, sickening and painful number of the NATO aggression of 1999. They were killed, ended, guilty of nothing, having committed no sin, without the right to defence, justice or life. No one has ever been held accountable for that crime, and that is a crime greater than the crime itself. No one was held accountable for the 2,500 killed — civilians, as well as soldiers and policemen — who were guilty only of guarding and protecting themselves and their homes. No one has ever been held accountable for the more than 6,000 persons injured.

Even today, 22 years later, it is not possible to explain that there is no universal justification for this, despite all the work that has been done to that end. There is no reason. It makes no sense and only the names remain — as eternal as sin itself.

**Mr. Guerra Sansonetti (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela feels compelled to take the floor to exercise its right of reply following the regrettable statement, replete with inaccuracies and unfounded accusations, by the representative of the Colombian Government.

It is a fact that our sister republic of Colombia has been engaged in a war for more than 60 years. It is also a fact that today every country neighbouring Colombia is reeling from the spillover of its domestic chaos. In our case, the border between Colombia and Venezuela, which is more than 2,200 kilometres long, is being exploited by those interested in fuelling a regional conflict, which poses a threat to our region's declared status as a zone of peace. It is also a fact — known publicly and through the media — that because he is so anxious to assuage his guilt and ignore his incompetence, Mr. Iván Duque Márquez blames Venezuela and my Government, without proof, for the serious issues that his Government is facing.

It is also true that through its deliberate actions Mr. Duque Márquez's Government has continued to ruin peace agreements in an attempt to export the consequences of its internal strife to Venezuela. It is also true that in Colombia, social, political and indigenous leaders, human rights defenders and former combatants have been murdered or disappeared. There are reports every day of massacres and discoveries of mass graves, as revealed by reports of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. According to the Institute for Development and Peace Studies in Colombia, 33 massacres and 80 murders of human rights leaders and defenders have been reported this year alone, in addition to the list of at least 11,000 persons who have gone missing between 2018 and 2021.

It is a fact that Colombia is the largest producer of drugs in the world, as confirmed in the *World Drug Report 2020* of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Mr. Duque Márquez's Government provides support to terrorist groups that have planned attacks on my country, in flagrant violation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

It is also a fact that the responsibility to protect is applied selectively. We underscore that we have never heard its proponents talk about the need to protect the Colombian people, who are denied their right to live in peace and today are the victims of violence on the part of Colombian State authorities. According to the Colombian non-governmental organization Temblores, as a result of protests that have so far lasted 15 days, more than 1,700 cases of police brutality have been reported over the past two weeks. There are reports of some 234 cases of physical violence, allegedly by the police; 37 murders, allegedly carried out by the police; 934 arbitrary arrests of demonstrators; 341 violent interventions by security forces; 46 victims struck around the eye area; 98 cases of the firing of weapons by police and 11 cases of sexual violence, including against 21 women.

In the light of this, we want to conclude by calling on the Colombian Government to comply with its duty to guarantee the protection and well-being of its people.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 135?

*It was so decided.*

## **Agenda item 19 (continued)**

### **Sustainable development**

#### **Draft resolution (A/75/L.83)**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Uzbekistan to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.83.

**Mr. Ibragimov (Uzbekistan):** Today I have the honour to present draft resolution A/75/L.83, entitled "Declaring the Aral Sea region a zone of ecological innovations and technologies". At the outset, I would like to thank all Member States for their active and constructive engagement and valuable input during the negotiations on the draft resolution.

The drying up of the Aral Sea, which until the 1960s was the fourth largest lake in the world, has become one of the most serious environmental problems of our time. Secretary-General António Guterres, who visited the Aral Sea in 2017, described its desiccation as one of the world's largest environmental disasters. It has caused a cascade of environmental, socioeconomic, health and humanitarian challenges for the Governments and communities in the region. In the past 50 years, thanks to the fivefold reduction in water flow from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers, the volume of the Aral Sea has shrunk by more than 14 times. Its salinity levels are 25 times higher and now significantly exceed those of the world's oceans. The Aral catastrophe has also exacerbated climate conditions in the region, increasing dryness and heat in summer and extending the periods of cold in winter. Today the dire ecological situation in the Aral Sea has also created serious challenges to human security, threatening the lives and livelihoods of the people in the region.

The situation has prompted Uzbekistan and the United Nations to establish a unified platform for mitigating the consequences of the Aral Sea crisis. In particular, at the initiative of Uzbekistan, the Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region was established in 2018. In addition, the President of Uzbekistan, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has proposed declaring the Aral Sea region a zone of ecological innovations and technologies in order to galvanize support for collective action for reducing vulnerability and advancing sustainable development in the region.

As a practical step in bringing that initiative to fruition, the President of Uzbekistan, during his address to the general debate of the General Assembly

at its seventy-fifth session, proposed the adoption of a draft resolution “declaring the Aral Sea a zone of ecological innovation and technologies” (see A/75/PV.6, annex 2). The proposed draft resolution emphasizes the importance of strengthening regional cooperation in the implementation of joint actions to overcome the negative consequences of the Aral Sea crisis and stabilize the ecological situation in the region by preventing further desertification and promoting socioeconomic development and adaptation to climate change, developing ecotourism and implementing other measures.

From Uzbekistan’s perspective, the draft resolution should help combine joint efforts to create the conditions for attracting foreign investment in the development and implementation of various projects based on environmentally sound and innovative energy- and water-saving technologies. The proposed draft resolution is also in full conformity with resolution 72/283, entitled “On strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region”, which calls on Member States to support the efforts of Central Asian countries aimed at mitigating the environmental and socioeconomic consequences of the drying up of the Aral Sea. We firmly believe that the productive cooperation and active support of the global community, along with that of the United Nations in its coordinating role, will help to achieve effective solutions to the environmental and other problems in the Aral Sea region. We think that today it is high time to look at the Aral Sea ecological tragedy as a source of opportunities rather than problems.

In conclusion, I would like to once again thank all Member States for their active participation in the negotiation process and to express my country’s sincere hope that our proposed draft resolution will be adopted unanimously today. I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage all delegations to join the list of sponsors.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.83, entitled “Declaring the Aral Sea region a zone of ecological innovations and technologies”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce

that since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/75/L.83: Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, the Gambia, Georgia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Lebanon, Lesotho, Malaysia, the Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, the Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Senegal, Singapore, South Sudan, Suriname, Togo, Turkey and Uganda.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.83?

*Draft resolution A/75/L.83 was adopted (resolution 75/278).*

**The Acting President:** Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position after adoption, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

**Mr. Utebaev** (Kyrgyzstan): The Kyrgyz Republic would like to explain its position on resolution 75/278, “Declaring the Aral Sea region as a zone of ecological innovations and technologies”.

The Kyrgyz Republic joined the consensus in adopting the resolution. At the same time, we would like to inform the Assembly that in 2016 the Kyrgyz Republic decided to freeze its participation in the activities of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and its bodies due to the Fund’s ineffectiveness and the lack of progress in reforming it. The negotiations held in 2010 and 2011 between experts from the States of the region on the issue did not lead to any results. The issue of reforming the Fund requires the joint efforts of all its member States and should be discussed and promoted by experts from within and outside the bodies of the Fund, including its Board. The Kyrgyz Republic once again expresses its readiness to engage in an expert-led discussion regarding reform of the Fund with the participation of representatives from all Central Asian countries. We hope that the countries of Central Asia will be able to achieve proper reform of the Fund in order to increase its efficiency and that of its bodies, taking into account the interests and urgent needs of all Central Asian countries.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position after adoption. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 19.

**Agenda item 136 (continued)**

**Impact of rapid technological change on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets**

**Draft resolution (A/75/L.84)**

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Spain to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.84.

**Ms. Bassols Delgado (Spain) (spoke in Spanish):** On behalf of Egypt, Turkey and Spain, the main sponsors, I am pleased to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.84, entitled “International Year of Glass, 2022”.

The draft resolution that we are presenting today was born many years ago on the shores of Tyre and Sidon — the cradle of Western civilization — where transparent, hard, colourful pearls were discovered in the remains of a night-time bonfire. Glass had emerged from the fusion of sand with alkaline ashes. From there, it made its way to Egypt, as a luxury possession of the pharaohs, and then on to Rome, before travelling across the Roman Empire. The invention of the blowpipe was the first technological revolution that made glass available to all. Later, in the thirteenth century, stained-glass windows brought light and colour into Gothic churches, thereby transforming architecture.

Glass has evolved with the history of humankind. This transparent, invisible substance explains and sustains the breakneck speed of technological progress and at the same time has the potential to build a fairer and more sustainable world. When optical fibres were invented in 1961, few could have foreseen the revolution in telecommunications and the birth of the Internet. The development of those transparent channels lies at the origins of globalization, with 5G in the twenty-first century and an unlimited future ahead of us. Glass is an essential material in architecture and clean energy. It is a biomaterial par excellence, with uses ranging from replacing and filling bones and healing wounds to forming the billions upon billions of chemically inert and resistant containers for vaccines against the coronavirus disease. Being infinitely recyclable, glass is also a good example of sustainable consumption and production.

That brief history supports the emerging thesis that we are entering a special moment in the history of humankind, the age of glass. That is why we propose the approval by the General Assembly of the year 2022 as the International Year of Glass. The project was launched in 2018, promoted by the International Commission on Glass and supported by the Community of Glass Associations and the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Glass.

The draft resolution that we are presenting today has been made possible thanks to the support of more than 1,500 organizations from 79 countries across five continents. Many countries endorse it, along with the world of glass science; universities and research centres; technology champions and glass manufacturers in every corner of the planet; professional societies; and museums and libraries. Scientists, educators, engineers, manufacturers and glass artists will be the protagonists, along with civil society, as recipients of and participants in thousands of activities around the world.

The celebration of the International Year of Glass will make a unique contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By extension, it will contribute to the advancement of the science, engineering and art of glass. Celebrated in keeping with the traditions of the international years declared by the United Nations, the International Year of Glass will enable progress in building solidarity around the world and creating a fairer and more sustainable future.

After a series of informal consultations, the text of the draft resolution has been submitted under the silence procedure. We are pleased to inform the Assembly that the silence has not been broken. We therefore hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus at today’s plenary session.

On behalf of Egypt, Turkey and Spain, the main sponsors, I should not conclude without thanking the representatives of all the Member States that actively participated in the negotiation process for their constructive contributions. Our thanks also go to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization for the advice and support it provided throughout the consultation process.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.84, entitled “International Year of Glass, 2022”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Nakano** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/75/L.84: Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Hungary, Japan, Kiribati, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Slovakia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.84?

*Draft resolution A/75/L.84 was adopted (resolution 75/279).*

**The Acting President:** Before giving the floor in explanation of position after adoption, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats. I give the floor to the representative of the United States.

**Mr. Messenger** (United States of America): The United States joins the consensus on resolution 75/279 and we thank Egypt, Spain and Turkey for their facilitation.

We would like to underscore that certain documents referenced in the resolution, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, are non-binding documents that do not create rights or obligations under international law. I refer the Assembly to our global explanation of position delivered on 1 September 2015 (see A/69/PV.101).

The United States does not support calls for technology transfer that are not both voluntary and on mutually agreed terms. With regard to the resolution's eleventh preambular paragraph, we urge the United Nations to show caution when identifying and dictating specific activities without a clear method of funding, including educational programmes and museum exhibitions associated with the International Year of Glass.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position after adoption. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 136.

## **Agenda item 169 (continued)**

### **Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur**

#### **Report of the Fifth Committee (A/75/681/Add.1)**

**The Acting President:** The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall therefore take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Committee before the Assembly today.

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position. I would like to remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

“When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee”.

I also want to remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Committee, unless notified otherwise in advance.

The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. We will now take a decision on the draft resolution. The Fifth Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

*The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 75/251 B).*

**The Acting President:** The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 169.

*The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.*