



General Assembly

Seventy-fifth session

92nd plenary meeting
 Wednesday, 21 July 2021, 11.30 a.m.
 New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Bozkir (Turkey)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Arriola Ramírez (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

Agenda item 12

Improving global road safety

Draft resolution (A/75/L.109)

Draft amendment (A/75/L.114)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom to introduce a draft amendment to draft resolution A/75/L.109. The draft amendment is contained in document A/75/L.114.

Mr. Reed (United Kingdom): I want to thank the co-facilitators, Russia and Côte d'Ivoire, for their work on draft resolution A/75/L.109. We look forward to fully supporting the high-level meeting on improving global road safety in 2022. However, we regret that operative paragraph 12 of the draft resolution represents a departure from recent consensus and seeks to take the power of decision-making away from the General Assembly.

We have put forward draft amendment A/75/L.114 with support from 41 other countries because we have serious concerns about the restrictive language in the draft resolution on civil-society access. That will come as no surprise to Member States in this room, as this is the fourth time that we have been asked to opine on the matter. It is the same question every time.

This draft amendment is not controversial. Full civil-society participation in this meeting has a long history, and quite rightly. Road safety is an issue in which civil society has played a critical role over the years. But there is language in the draft under consideration that will allow any Member State to arbitrarily and unilaterally block any non-governmental organization from anywhere in the world from participating in this event. We are proposing the draft amendment to ensure that their voices are heard.

I would like to make three points about the draft amendment. First, it seeks to return the General Assembly to the consensus approach of the three modalities resolutions adopted early this year — resolution 75/260, entitled “Organization of the 2021 high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS”, resolution 75/282, entitled “Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes” and resolution 75/283, entitled “Modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons” — and of similar texts as far back as 2001.

Secondly, it amends the language from previous resolutions on road safety modalities because that language denied access for the voices of legitimate partners, people with real experience on the issue, people we ought to hear from and who can inform our thinking with their knowledge and expertise.

Thirdly, our draft amendment does not remove, check or control. It simply gives decision-making power

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back to the Assembly rather than to any single Member State. It empowers us to take a corporate decision on whom we can and cannot hear. It removes the power of censorship from individual States. We therefore call on all Member States to vote in its favour. Our ability to hear from all the relevant voices in our global fight for road safety depends on their support.

Ms. Sulaiman (Brunei Darussalam): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation to the Deputy Permanent Representatives of Côte d'Ivoire and the Russian Federation and to commend their efforts in their role as co-facilitators of the intergovernmental process to define the scope and modalities for the high-level meeting on improving global road safety, on which draft resolution A/75/L.109 is to be adopted today.

Approximately 1.3 million people are killed each year as a result of road traffic crashes. Between 20 million and 50 million more suffer non-fatal injuries, with many incurring disabilities as a result of their injuries. More than half of all road traffic deaths are among vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. There is no doubt that road crashes are a major threat to public health and global development. The initiative on raising awareness in order to improve global road safety is therefore very timely.

ASEAN is committed to doing its part to support the General Assembly in achieving its target of halving the global number of deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2030, as set out in resolution 74/299. ASEAN's efforts towards that end were reflected through its adoption in 2004 of the Phnom Penh Ministerial Declaration on ASEAN Road Safety, which saw the establishment of an ASEAN multisector road-safety working group to coordinate and oversee the implementation of the ASEAN Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2005-2010. On 6 November 2015, recognizing the need to identify the key strategic directions that could enable ASEAN Member States to reduce their road fatalities by 50 per cent by 2020 and to work to further decrease the forecast level of road fatalities in ASEAN countries by 2030, the twenty-first ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting adopted ASEAN's Regional Road Safety Strategy. That document provided a framework for road safety

strategies at the regional level in accordance with the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.

We are also committed to enhancing cooperation and networking among national road safety centres in ASEAN. We acknowledge the role of the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research as an ASEAN road safety centre in integrating the effort among ASEAN Member States concerning road safety in the region. As part of that commitment, the Institute organized ASEAN's Road Safety Week programme with the theme of "Managing speed" from 17 to 23 May 2021, in conjunction with the sixth Global Road Safety Week 2021 organized by the United Nations. Furthermore, the Institute will organize the third conference on ASEAN Road Safety this September in Malaysia. The conference aims to bring together policymakers, scientists, researchers, practitioners, law-enforcement representatives, academicians and a wide range of public and private organizations from the region with an interest in the future of road safety. It will be a premier platform for bringing together key players in road safety within the South-East Asian region as well as at the international level.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm ASEAN's commitment to improving global road safety and its support for the successful convening of the high-level meeting on improving global road safety in 2022.

Mr. Sharma (India): India welcomes the opportunity to participate in this debate on the important issue of global road safety. We would like to thank the delegations of the Russian Federation and Côte d'Ivoire for their work in bringing draft resolution A/75/L.109 before us today.

We welcome the decision to organize a high-level meeting of the General Assembly next year on improving global road safety and look forward to adopting the draft resolution on its scope, modalities and format today. We believe that the meeting will be an important platform for further accelerating our efforts to improve global road safety, including supporting developing countries in building their capacities and providing financial and technical support for their efforts.

The issue of road safety is directly and importantly linked to economic and social development as well as public health, as is reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 3 and 11. India attaches great importance to addressing the problem

of road safety. As a developing country, India's economic growth relies in part on rapid expansion of our infrastructure, including roads. We are therefore acutely conscious of the imperative need to address road safety and reduce the adverse consequences of traffic accidents. The Government of India is actively engaged in efforts to enhance road safety through a multifaceted approach. Our Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is the nodal body entrusted with the responsibility of formulating policies for road safety. Various initiatives being implemented include grants and aid to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for organizing road safety programmes and creating awareness, a national highway accident relief service scheme, the establishment of model driving training schools and refresher training for drivers of heavy vehicles. Awards have also been instituted at various levels to recognize important contributions to road safety.

India is restructuring and strengthening "the four E's" of road safety, that is, engineering, enforcement, education and emergency care services. They include better and safer road engineering, more effective legislation, improved vehicular safety standards, training of drivers, improved trauma care and public awareness-raising. Our recent enactment, in 2019, of a Motor Vehicles Amendment Act is an important step towards the improvement of the overall road safety ecosystem in India. The law includes high penalties for traffic violations and sections on the utilization of documents, vehicular safety standards, sustainable public transport, insurance-based reforms and the use of an information-technology-based enforcement system.

In line with the direction of the Supreme Court of India, the Government has issued detailed guidelines for protecting bystanders who assist road accident victims, also known as good Samaritans. Recognizing civil society's important role in improving road safety, the Government is working closely with its representatives and providing them with support, as it did last year through its provision of financial assistance to more than 300 NGOs for road safety advocacy programmes.

We strongly support efforts to increase cooperation at the national, regional and global levels for achieving road safety objectives. In New Delhi in 2017, India hosted a forum for Transport Ministers in cooperation with the International Road Federation. The forum culminated in the signing of the Delhi Declaration, which stressed key road-safety measures, including

international legal instruments, capacity-building, road infrastructure safety standards and the importance of mobilizing funding. At the third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, held in Stockholm in February last year, India committed to halving its road accident deaths by 2030.

In conclusion, we firmly believe that international cooperation is vital to assisting developing countries in effectively addressing road safety issues. Adequate financial resources, technical assistance, capacity-building, the sharing of best practices and advocacy are crucial in that regard.

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

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/75/L.109 and draft amendment A/75/L.114. In that connection, I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Ochalik (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): This oral statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of operative paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 6 and 13 of draft resolution A/75/L.109, in operative paragraph 1 the General Assembly would decide that the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on improving global road safety would be held in New York in 2022, back-to-back with the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, with a view to addressing gaps and challenges, mobilizing political leadership, promoting multisectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration in that regard and assessing the progress made in attaining the objectives of the road safety-related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In operative paragraph 3, the General Assembly further decides that the organizational arrangements for the high-level meeting should be as follows. The high-level meeting will consist of an opening segment, a plenary segment, up to three multi-stakeholder thematic panel discussions and a brief closing segment. The opening segment, to be held from 10 to 10.30 a.m. on the first day, will feature statements by the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, the Secretary-General, the Director-General of the World Health Organization and the Special Envoy of

the Secretary-General for Road Safety. The plenary segment, to be held from 10.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on the first day, and from 4.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. on the second day, will consist of statements by Member States and observers of the General Assembly. A list of speakers will be established in accordance with the rules of procedure and established practices of the Assembly, and the time limits for those statements will be three minutes for individual delegations and five minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of States. The closing segment, to be held from 5.30 p.m. to 6 p.m. on the second day, will consist of summaries of the multi-stakeholder thematic panel discussions and concluding remarks by the President of the Assembly.

In operative paragraph 4, the General Assembly decides that the organizational arrangements for the multi-stakeholder thematic panel discussions will be as follows. Up to three multi-stakeholder panels will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. on the second day. Each of the multi-stakeholder panel discussions will be co-chaired by two representatives, one from a developed and one from a developing country, to be appointed by the President of the General Assembly from among the senior representatives of Member States attending the high-level meeting, in consultation with Member States, taking into account gender balance, level of development and geographical representation. The themes of the multi-stakeholder panels will take into consideration the road safety-related targets of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the interactive multi-stakeholder hearing, with a view to ensuring the most effective and efficient outcomes and potential deliverables and sharing experiences and lessons learned in order to address remaining implementation gaps. The President of the General Assembly should also consider inviting parliamentarians, representatives of local Governments, Heads or senior representatives of Member States, relevant United Nations entities, including the World Bank, development partners, civil society, the private sector, academia, youth-led organizations, medical associations, indigenous leadership and community organizations to serve as speakers in the panel discussions, taking into account gender balance, level of development and geographical representation.

In operative paragraph 6, the General Assembly invites the President of the General Assembly, with the support of the World Health Organization and the United Nations regional commissions, in cooperation

with other relevant partners, before the end of 2021, as part of the preparatory process for the high-level meeting, to convene, preside over and prepare a summary of an informal one-day supporting event consisting of two segments, as follows: an interactive thematic dialogue on investment in road safety, to be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., in order to discuss the importance of road safety-related domestic and international finance for achieving the road safety-related Sustainable Development Goal targets and its broader positive impact on public health and the economy; an interactive multi-stakeholder hearing, to be held from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., with the active participation of representatives of Member States, observers of the General Assembly, parliamentarians, representatives of local Governments, relevant United Nations entities, invited civil-society organizations, including non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, philanthropic foundations, academia and medical associations, as well as the private sector and broader communities, so as to ensure the participation and voices of women, children, persons with disabilities, youth and indigenous leaders.

In operative paragraph 13, the General Assembly decides that the proceedings of the high-level meeting will be webcast, and encourages the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General to give the highest visibility to the high-level meeting, through all relevant media platforms and information and communications technologies.

With regard to operative paragraphs 1, 3 and 4, the Secretariat understands that the high-level meeting to be held in New York in 2022 would use the meeting entitlements of the General Assembly. When such meetings are held using entitlements of the Assembly, if the meetings are held in a virtual or hybrid format rather than an in-person format, the respective programme would be adjusted to two hours per morning meeting and two hours per afternoon meeting, taking into consideration that remote simultaneous interpretation is available for two hours per meeting only. Otherwise, additional cost implications would arise that cannot be met within the 2022 programme budget.

Furthermore, with regard to operative paragraphs 6 and 13, the Secretariat understands that the proceedings of both the high-level meeting and the informal one-day supporting event would require meeting coverage and webcast services. While both services would entail an additional workload for the Department of Global

Communications, the related resource requirements, totalling \$12,500, would be met within the programme budget in the applicable year. Accordingly, the adoption of draft resolution A/75/L.109 would not entail any budgetary implications with regard to the programme budget.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before we proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.109 and the draft amendment to it contained in document A/75/L.114, delegations wishing to make a statement in explanation of vote or position before the adoption of or voting on the draft resolution and the draft amendment are invited to do so now in one intervention.

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

Mrs. Košir (Slovenia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 member States.

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We welcome today's meeting and would like to thank the President and the co-facilitators, Russia and Côte d'Ivoire, for their efforts. Agreeing on the modalities for the high-level meeting on improving global road safety today is an important milestone for the high-level meeting. We therefore welcome draft resolution A/75/L.109.

Let me turn to the issue of civil-society participation in the high-level meeting, which is a high priority for the European Union and the reason why, together with others in a broad cross-regional initiative, we have proposed and sponsored draft amendment A/75/L.114, which will not only provide more transparency but aims to restore to the General Assembly the power of decision-making on the participation of civil-society organizations.

With an estimated 1.3 million people killed on the world's roads every year and tens of millions seriously injured, improving global road safety is a matter of concern for all. Road traffic crashes are currently the number-one killer globally among young people aged

between 15 and 29. Draft resolution A/75/L.109 has set a goal of reducing road traffic deaths and injuries by at least 50 per cent by 2030. All stakeholders should join forces and share experiences to help achieve that goal. The activities of civil-society organizations have played a crucial role in this area for decades and continue to make extensive contributions, as demonstrated by their active participation in the third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Stockholm in 2020 and during the United Nations Global Road Safety Week in May 2021. Civil-society organizations influence decision-making through advocacy, provide essential capacity-building in the global South and represent the voices of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, as well as the rights of crash victims. The high-level meeting will discuss how to best improve global road safety with a view to addressing gaps and challenges as well as mobilizing political leadership and promoting multisectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration. In order for us to stay informed, we need to hear about the experiences of all involved. We cannot afford to leave such experiences unheard. We cannot afford to be without the support of any stakeholder when it comes to road safety.

We want to remind the Assembly that the draft resolution explicitly foresees a role for multi-stakeholder collaboration, including civil society. And yet in our view the current proposal fails to provide space for meaningful participation on the part of civil society. As it stands now, the text of operative paragraph 11 states that objections to the inclusion of organizations on the list that the President of the General Assembly draws up must be made transparent and explained. The EU and its member States, together with other delegations, have consistently raised strong concerns on various occasions about the way in which previous non-objection clauses have been abused. Rejections cannot be exercised in an arbitrary manner. The final decision on the list of civil-society organizations must be made by the General Assembly itself, not by any individual Member State. In our amendment, we therefore request that the final decision on the list of civil-society organizations be made by the General Assembly. We want to bring back the power of decision to the Assembly.

Let me be clear on two issues. First, this is not about any specific decision taken by any civil-society organization. It is about ensuring that all voices are heard and that experiences can be broadly shared. We believe firmly that there are no reasons for the

United Nations and the General Assembly to be afraid of hearing all voices in taking our decisions. I would also like to emphasize that we would have favoured a more open clause on participation by civil-society organizations, as we proposed in the negotiations on the draft resolution. However, we listened carefully to delegations that consider a right of objection important. The amendment was drafted in that spirit of compromise with a broad, cross-regional coalition, and it also represents a return to well-established United Nations modalities from previous years.

Mr. Kelson (Australia): I am making this statement on behalf of Canada, New Zealand and my own country, Australia.

At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation to Côte d'Ivoire and the Russian Federation for their efforts on draft resolution A/75/L.109, and we look forward to a successful high-level meeting on improving global road safety in 2022.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand strongly support inclusive and transparent approaches to civil-society participation at United Nations events, meetings and conferences. For that reason, we regret the inclusion of language in operative paragraph 11 that would move the General Assembly away from that principle. As currently formulated, operative paragraph 11 would allow any individual Member State to unilaterally block a civil-society organization from participating in the high-level meeting. That would remove the General Assembly's power to have a final say in the matter. We therefore note with appreciation that the United Kingdom has proposed a draft amendment to operative paragraph 11 (A/75/L.114) that responds to the broad support in this body for a more inclusive approach to civil-society participation at United Nations meetings, placing the final decision-making power back in the hands of the General Assembly. Importantly, it also aligns with language from the three most recently adopted modalities texts, as well as the practices of many General Assembly high-level events and conferences over the years.

It is critical to see that the General Assembly takes the necessary steps to ensure the meaningful participation of civil society at United Nations meetings. We therefore strongly urge all delegations to vote in favour of the draft amendment.

Mr. Walter (United States of America): To start with, the United States would like to thank

the co-facilitators, Côte d'Ivoire and Russia, for all the hard work that they have put into leading us in these negotiations.

The United States appreciates the time that all delegations devoted to negotiating this modalities draft resolution (A/75/L.109). We value United Nations efforts to promote and improve global road safety and look forward to the high-level meeting on improving global road safety next year. We strongly support the draft amendment (A/75/L.114) proposed to operative paragraph 11 of the draft resolution, which will guarantee the inclusive participation of civil society and ensure accountability and transparency by bringing issues of concern to the whole General Assembly for a decision. We therefore urge all members to vote in favour of this important draft amendment today. Those same modalities have also been adopted in recent resolutions, including in the consensus modalities text on the Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes (resolution 75/282). It is critical that through this draft amendment today, we enable civil society's meaningful participation in order to ensure that its views are heard and can inform our discussions on road safety at the high-level meeting next year.

Mr. Liu Yang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): My delegation would like to explain its vote before the voting on draft amendment A/75/L.114, introduced by the United Kingdom.

Regarding the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the high-level meeting on improving global road safety, China believes that draft resolution A/75/L.109, proposed by Côte d'Ivoire and Russia, its co-facilitators, reflects the consensus text formulated within the framework of the General Assembly over the years. The consensus is that NGOs with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council are allowed to register with the Secretariat to attend meetings, while other relevant NGOs may attend meetings upon consideration by Member States on a non-objection basis.

The consensus text not only ensures NGOs' effective participation in the high-level meeting, it also maintains the intergovernmental nature of meetings held in the framework of the General Assembly. That is reasonable, appropriate and in line with long-standing Assembly practices. As examples, I would like to

point to recent General Assembly resolutions such as 72/243, on the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit, 73/292, on the 2020 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, 73/303, on the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, 74/269, on the scope, modalities, format and organization of the summit on biodiversity, and 74/276, on the special session of the General Assembly against corruption, to name just a few. All of them reasonably and properly solved the issue of NGO participation through this modality and were adopted by consensus. I want to reiterate that all those resolutions were adopted by consensus.

Regrettably, some countries have proposed a draft amendment (A/75/L.114) on the participation of NGOs that fundamentally weakens the role of Member States in considering this matter on a non-objection basis, undermines a balanced and pragmatic arrangement that has been in place for years and deviates from a consensus reached among the broad membership. For that reason, China will vote against it.

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

Before proceeding further, I would like to inform the Assembly that draft amendment A/75/L.114 has closed for e-sponsorship. I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Ochalik (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft amendment, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft amendment A/75/L.114: Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Timor-Leste, Ukraine and the United States.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before we proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.109, in accordance with rule 90 of the rules of

procedure, the Assembly will first take a decision on draft amendment A/75/L.114.

A recorded vote has been requested on the draft amendment.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, China, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Uganda, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Angola, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Philippines, Sao Tome and Principe, Singapore, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Zambia

Draft amendment A/75/L.114 was adopted by 81 votes to 36, with 30 abstentions.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Since draft amendment A/75/L.114 is adopted, we shall proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.109, as amended.

The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/75/L.109, as amended, entitled “Scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting on improving global road safety”.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.109, as amended?

Draft resolution A/75/L.109, as amended, was adopted (resolution 75/308).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor for explanations of vote or position after the voting, I would like to remind the Assembly that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ghadirkhomi (Islamic Republic of Iran): In a spirit of constructive engagement, my delegation joined the consensus on the adoption of resolution 75/308, entitled “Scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting on improving global road safety”. However, we regret that the sponsor of the draft amendment (A/75/L.114) to operative paragraph 11 of the draft resolution was not able to agree to its previously agreed language. We believe that the co-facilitators’ text for operative paragraph 11 was based on established General Assembly practice providing for Member States’ consideration of the list of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on a non-objection basis, whereas the new language, as contained in the amendment adopted, interferes in the duties of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and downgrades the consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. At the same time, it undermines the Assembly’s intergovernmental nature, contrary to its terms of reference and the Charter of the United Nations. Having said that, my delegation dissociates itself from operative paragraph 11 of the resolution, as amended based on draft amendment A/75/L.114.

Ms. Mustafa (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic would like to thank the two co-facilitators, the Russian Federation and Côte d’Ivoire, for their efforts in facilitating the negotiations on draft resolution

A/75/L.109, entitled “Scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting on improving global road safety”. We look forward to the successful holding of the high-level meeting in 2022, and we underscore the importance of working to implement the road safety goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The goals and objectives of sustainable development are integrated and indivisible, and we therefore believe that investing in road safety has a positive impact on public health and economies.

My delegation participated actively in the negotiations on resolution 75/308. The co-facilitators made commendable efforts to arrive at language that was previously agreed on in resolutions on the modalities of work of high-level meetings, especially with regard to the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the high-level meeting to be held in 2022 on improving global road safety. We regret the lack of consensus on the issue of the participation of those organizations, as expressed in the resolution’s operative paragraph 11, for which some insisted on introducing non-consensus language and replacing the original with language establishing a new, non-consensus-based practice that undermines the principle of non-objection in particular and the working methods of the General Assembly in general.

The willingness of some delegations to introduce non-consensus language into a context of multilateral action undermines that action and the spirit of plurality that we should maintain for it. It also constitutes a serious violation that deprives Member States of their no-objection-based right to review and consider the participation of NGOs. We are not opposed to the principle of NGO participation in General Assembly meetings. But given our Organization’s intergovernmental nature, we believe that the participation of NGOs that do not have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council should be considered in accordance with the current rules of procedure of the United Nations. My delegation therefore dissociates itself from operative paragraph 11 of resolution 75/308.

Mr. Pilipenko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus supported the consensus adoption of resolution 75/308, entitled “Scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting on improving global road safety”. The issue of road safety affects the health of populations and has a wide range of socioeconomic impacts that are capable of negatively affecting countries’ sustainable development and undermining their progress on

implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. The period from 2021 to 2030 has been declared the second Decade of Action for Road Safety, and its objective is to reduce death and injury from road accidents by at least 50 per cent.

We supported the co-facilitators' efforts to prepare a consensus document that incorporated the positions of all parties. We are concerned about the introduction of the draft amendment (A/75/L.114) to operative paragraph 11 of the resolution, which contains controversial language. We want to point out that initiatives promoting wording that is not based on consensus and runs counter to existing practice are becoming systematic when it comes to the participation of non-governmental organizations, something that runs counter to the principles of multilateralism. In view of that, Belarus voted against the amendment to the resolution.

Mr. Toure (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of Côte d'Ivoire and the Russian Federation.

I would first like to express our gratitude for the confidence that Member States placed in us by entrusting the Deputy Permanent Representatives of our countries with the worthy task of coordinating the negotiations on resolution 75/308, which has just been adopted. I would also like to thank all delegations for working together constructively on this important document, as well as our colleagues from the World Health Organization for their support before and during the consultations.

We are genuinely pleased that the idea of a high-level meeting on improving global road safety, proposed by the Russian Federation in 2018, has received the support of the States Members of the United Nations. We welcome the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 75/308, on the modalities of that high-level meeting to be held in New York in the summer of 2022. We hope that thanks to our joint efforts, the event may become a milestone in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to road safety.

Road accidents continue to pose a wide range of challenges for the international community, including on the humanitarian and socioeconomic fronts, as well as in the areas of urbanization and public health. Nevertheless, a decade after the first Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, held in Moscow, work at the United Nations on this issue has been systematized and

has reached a new qualitative level. The international community has significant tools at its disposal, particularly SDG target 3.6, the second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030, the United Nations Road Safety Fund to finance relevant actions, and public national and regional campaigns such as that featuring the famed Ivorian footballer Didier Drogba. We hope that the first political declaration of the United Nations General Assembly on road safety, to be adopted at the outcome of the high-level meeting next July — we hope by consensus — will add to the impressive list of actions supporting this crucial agenda for achieving the SDGs.

The declaration will bring together the results of efforts to combat road accidents over recent years and lay out solid, robust guidelines for the second United Nations decade in this area, up to 2030. We feel sure that the meeting scheduled to take place before the end of this year in preparation for the high-level meeting will also enable us to address such important issues as investment in road safety, the creation of reliable road infrastructure, traffic management, the development of public-private partnerships and so on. Along with every other delegation we are prepared to continue to make a constructive contribution to international cooperation in order to improve road safety worldwide.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 12?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 15 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Draft resolution A/75/L.115

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Morocco to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.115.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I am particularly pleased today to be introducing draft resolution A/75/L.115, entitled "Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech". The draft is a continuation of the Assembly's historic resolution 73/328, adopted by consensus in 2019. The text presented under

General Assembly agenda item 15 seeks primarily to strengthen our collective commitment to promoting a culture of peace and non-violence for the well-being of humankind and future generations, and to reiterate the importance of collectively combating hate speech and of our obligation to do so.

In recent years, and particularly in recent months, we have seen an exacerbation and exponential increase in hate speech. Among the major repercussions of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, a number of regions around the world are dealing with the spread and proliferation of disinformation and messages fomenting hate, stigmatization and mistrust, which represent a flagrant denial of the values of peace, tolerance, coexistence and dialogue enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco, Commander of the Faithful, became aware early on of the danger of hate speech spread by violent extremism, obscurantism and populism as well as racism of all types. That is why he alerted the United Nations community at the High-level Event on the Power of Education for Countering Racism and Discrimination: The Case of Anti-Semitism, held here on 26 September 2018, saying that

“several regions around the world are following the logic of exclusion, isolation and rejection of others. Hate speech is increasing, fuelling racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and many other forms of discrimination. It creates a breeding ground for violent extremism and thereby spreads insecurity”.

In order to address that danger, King Mohammed advocated for a vision of global solidarity, and this was well before the COVID-19 crisis. Indeed, in his message to the second International Conference on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue in Fez in 2018, he stated that

“we wish to establish, as a collective, a new world order of peace based on the principles of coexistence, acceptance, pluralism and integrity. Only in those circumstances will it be possible to continue building, developing and consolidating security, faith and prosperity”.

The initiative of this draft resolution today is born of that humanistic vision of interpersonal and inter-State relations, based on interfaith coexistence, intercultural

harmony and the peaceful coexistence of civilizations. The foundational principle of all those universal values is the acceptance of humankind and of others in all their diversity.

The draft resolution is the result of three rounds of substantive negotiations, several informal meetings and dozens of bilateral discussions. From the beginning, our goal was to achieve a consensus resolution. In that regard, the Moroccan facilitator took an open, transparent and inclusive approach with the goal of rallying goodwill around the draft resolution’s noble and humanistic cause. The current draft, which I have the honour to present, draws its strength from and reaffirms United Nations doctrine intended to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, including the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, the Fez Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes, the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, as well as the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites.

In addition, the draft resolution provides for three concrete measures to be taken by the United Nations in the context of multilateral engagement, with a view to collectively strengthening the fight against hate speech, racism and discrimination. The first is to proclaim 18 June as the International Day for Countering Hate Speech, to be observed annually. The second is to convene a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on 18 June 2022, to mark the commemoration of the first International Day for Countering Hate Speech. And the third is to urge Member States to support transparent and accessible systems for identifying, tracking and collecting data and analysing trends regarding hate speech in order to support effective responses.

I should not conclude without expressing Morocco’s sincere thanks to all the delegations that contributed constructively to the enrichment of this draft resolution throughout the negotiation process and demonstrated the engagement, flexibility and wisdom that enabled us to achieve consensus on the draft text. I would also like to warmly thank the delegations that have already become sponsors of this initiative. I hope for the support and sponsorship of others that have not yet done so.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/75/L.115.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Ochalik (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): This oral statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of operative paragraph 12 of draft resolution A/75/L.115, the General Assembly would request the President of the General Assembly to convene an informal high-level meeting on 18 June 2022 to mark the commemoration of the first International Day for Countering Hate Speech, in order to contribute to spearheading political support to develop strategies to identify, address and counter hate speech at the national and global levels, taking into account, as appropriate, the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech.

With regard to operative paragraph 12, the Secretariat understands that the informal high-level meeting to be held in New York on 18 June 2022 would use the meeting entitlements of the General Assembly. When such meetings are held using entitlements of the General Assembly, if the meetings are held in a virtual or hybrid format rather than in an in-person format the meeting would be adjusted to two hours in duration, taking into consideration the fact that remote simultaneous interpretation is available only for two hours per meeting. Otherwise, additional cost implications would arise that could not be met within the 2022 programme budget.

Furthermore, the Secretariat understands that the proceedings of the informal high-level meeting will be webcast. While the webcast would entail an additional workload for the Department of Global Communications, the resource requirements would be met within the 2022 programme budget. Accordingly, the adoption of draft resolution A/75/L.115 would not entail any budgetary implications with regard to the programme budget.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.115, entitled “Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech”. I should inform the Assembly that the draft resolution has closed for e-sponsorship.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Ochalik (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of draft resolution A/75/L.115, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, India, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Monaco, Mozambique, Nepal, the Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zambia.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/75/L.115?

Draft resolution A/75/L.115 was adopted (resolution 75/309).

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

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

We thank Morocco for bringing resolution 75/309 to the General Assembly. However, we feel compelled to express our concern about the proliferation of initiatives on interreligious and intercultural dialogues outside the Third Committee.

The EU is opposed to all forms of incitement to violence or hatred and hate speech online and offline,

while maintaining full articulation of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. According to the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, hate speech covers any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour that attacks anyone or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are — in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor. We regret that the text before us looks at hate speech only in the context of religious intolerance. Only a comprehensive approach tackling all aspects and grounds of discrimination and violence can have a real impact. In that regard, we insist on the vital importance of ensuring respect for the right to freedom of opinion and expression, to access to information, and to privacy, which are all interlinked. Attempts to restrict or violate those rights can only fuel violence and hatred. For that reason, the EU made several proposals aimed at reflecting those rights in the text. We are disappointed that they were not all taken on board.

The final text also includes unclear concepts that are designed to question the rules-based international order and the universality of human rights. The EU reiterates its full support for multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core. We reaffirm the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Finally, the EU would like to remind the Assembly of its principled position against the proliferation and duplication of international days.

Mr. Reed (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom thanks the delegation of Morocco for its work in facilitating resolution 75/309. We support the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance. We also support freedom of expression as both a human right in itself and for the contribution it can make to supporting other rights. However, we reject any incitement of violence or hatred against individuals or members of religious or belief minorities. That is why incitement to violence is a criminal offence in the United Kingdom.

Beyond general principles, and regarding the specifics of the text, the United Kingdom wants to make an observation on the resolution's twenty-third preambular paragraph. While we believe in the principle of mutual respect, we disagree with specific elements in the statement attributed to the spokesperson of the

High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. The statement, entitled "A Call for Mutual Respect", lacks evidence for some of its conclusions. We want to stress that in line with common General Assembly practice, the reference in the twenty-third preambular paragraph noting that Call does not amount to the Assembly's endorsement of its contents. With regard to that paragraph, people must be allowed to freely discuss and debate issues, peacefully challenge their Governments, exercise their right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and speak out against violations of human rights wherever they occur.

Ms. Brisbane (Australia): We thank Morocco for bringing this important resolution (resolution 75/309) to the General Assembly. Australia commends the strengthening of efforts to identify and understand the impact of hate speech in undermining tolerance and heightening the risk of identity-based tension and violence. We also appreciate the challenge of protecting people from malicious harm as a result of misinformation, disinformation or hate speech while at the same time assuring our right to freedom of opinion and expression. We strongly support the resolution's overall aim of promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech, but we must also express some disappointment in its negotiation.

While noting the references to the Fez Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes, the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech and the role of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, the resolution could have been strengthened by a more collective effort to adopt language that positions it within the context of the overarching United Nations framework on peace and security, and particularly by highlighting the linkages between hate speech and the heightened risk of violence and mass atrocities. We believe it is critical to develop consistent language and joined-up approaches across the human rights, peace, security and justice spectrum.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has exacerbated vulnerabilities and significantly challenged our collective progress on human rights. Its scarring and ongoing effects are also providing a tragic foundation for increasing levels of identity-based hate speech and incitement to violence, as well as other drivers that heighten the risk of the very worst of crimes — that

is, mass atrocities. More than ever, it is our shared responsibility to take every opportunity to interrogate the ways in which the United Nations system, in all its moving parts, can improve our capacity for accountability, early warning, mitigation and prevention in the area of human rights violations, abuses and mass atrocity crimes.

Australia is committed to the spirit and intent of resolution 75/309. We thank the facilitators for their work, and we encourage continued constructive dialogue on the challenges ahead.

Ms. Khusanova (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the adoption of resolution 75/309, entitled “Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech”, and we thank the delegation of Morocco for its painstaking efforts to reach a consensus on the draft. The Russian Federation attaches great importance to interreligious and intercultural dialogue and supports the work of combating hate speech. We firmly believe that this resolution will be a valuable addition to the efforts of the international community on these issues.

The building of trusting relationships and the promotion of good-neighbourliness and mutual respect among States, peoples and communities play a major role in combating the inequalities that help xenophobia, racism, intolerance, hate speech and disinformation flourish. In that regard, we regret that the corresponding passage was removed from the draft resolution at the request of some States.

Russia has centuries of experience in ensuring the peaceful coexistence of many nationalities, cultures and faiths, and we are ready to share it. One platform designed to share precisely such experience is the World Conference on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue being organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union together with the United Nations, with the participation of Heads of State and Government, parliamentary and religious leaders, as well as representatives of civil society and youth, and which will be held in our country in May 2022.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position. We will now hear a statement after adoption. I give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Monsignor Hansen (Holy See): The Holy See acknowledges the adoption of resolution 75/309, entitled

“Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech”, and thanks Morocco for its efforts in facilitating the negotiations.

The Holy See would like to reiterate its long-standing commitment to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue as important components in the cause of peace, and points to such examples as the interreligious meeting in Assisi in 1986 organized by Pope John Paul II and the signing in 2019 of the document “Human fraternity for world peace and living together” by Pope Francis and Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyib. As Pope Francis remarked during his recent apostolic journey to Iraq,

“only if we learn to look beyond our differences and see each other as members of the same human family will we be able to begin an effective process of rebuilding and leave to future generations a better, more just and more humane world.”

The promotion of dialogue among nations, including intercultural dialogue, is at the heart of the work of the United Nations. However, my delegation would like to remind the Assembly of a crucial distinction between intercultural dialogue on the one hand and interreligious dialogue on the other. Interreligious dialogue, which is also essential to promoting lasting peace, social cohesion and all the elements and aspects that it touches on — that is, religious beliefs and practices — is a competence of religious leaders and believers and not of the United Nations, which has no mandate to establish the confines or the purpose of such religious dialogue. Indeed, that could limit the scope and possibility of such dialogue. My delegation is therefore concerned about the possibility that a lack of understanding of the nature of interreligious dialogue sets a worrying precedent by which the sacred space of religion may be encroached on even by the United Nations and its various offices.

The negotiations on the resolution showed clearly that issues surrounding hate speech, discrimination, freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression and privacy are subject to ongoing discussions and disagreements among States, as today’s discussions have also confirmed. That unfortunately points to a lack of a shared understanding of the broader issues on the table, including the protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to freedom of assembly and association and the right to privacy, all of which are inextricably linked to the exercise of

the right to freedom of religion or belief. It is vital to advance a common understanding of the concepts used in the context of the agenda item “Culture of peace” and related forums and contexts, as well as the respective roles of States, religious communities and leaders and the Secretariat. Also, by devoting sufficient time and space to the discussion of texts of this nature, we can avoid the risk of imposing priorities and ideologies

that are not shared by all States, which creates division rather than unity.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 15.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.