



United Nations

GENERAL ASSEMBLY » PLENARY  
MEETINGS COVERAGE

SEVENTY-SIXTH SESSION,  
52ND & 53RD MEETINGS (AM & PM)

GA/12396  
16 DECEMBER 2021

**General Assembly Adopts 59 Third Committee Texts on Trafficking in Persons, Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccines, as Delegates Spar over Language**

**World Body Proclaims 2022 International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development**

The General Assembly adopted 59 resolutions and one decision recommended by its Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) today, covering a range of issues, from the rights of refugees and others forced to flee their homes, to the provision of universal and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Several resolutions dealt with the theme of migration and the movement of people, including refugees and those internally displaced. One text, on improving coordination in the fight against human trafficking, was adopted by consensus. By its terms, the Assembly decided to convene a high-level meeting on the progress achieved in implementing the 2010 Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, at its eightieth session. It also called on Member States, as well as international organizations, civil society and the private sector, to increase prevention efforts in countries of origin, transit and destination.

The Assembly also adopted without a vote a resolution on strengthening the role of the United Nations in the holding of genuine elections — a move that prompted multiple delegations to take the floor to stress that while they had joined consensus on the text, they wished to disassociate from two paragraphs that contained non-agreed language.

Egypt's delegate cautioned that the terms "women in all their diversity", "gender identity" and "sexual orientation" only undermined the resolution by showing a lack of respect for cultural norms. Proposed amendments — which had gathered the support of 58 countries — had not made it into the draft, he said. In a similar vein, Belarus's delegate underscored that such language was "aggressive" in its attempt to forward concepts that had not achieved international recognition, while Ethiopia's representative noted that the imposition of the values of one society on another is "unacceptable". Saudi Arabia's representative said that God created man and woman, emphasizing that anything that is neither male nor female is "against nature". Libya's delegate noted that the terms did not consider the religious framework of his country.

By the text, the Assembly called upon States to take measures to eliminate laws, regulations and practices that discriminate, directly or indirectly, against citizens in their right to participate in public affairs, including based on race, colour, ethnicity, national or social origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, language, religion, political views or on the basis of disability.

**This year, the Assembly adopted four new texts, three of which — on homelessness, volunteerism and rare diseases — were adopted by consensus**, while the resolution on equitable access for all countries to COVID vaccines passed by a recorded vote of 179 in favour to none against, with 7 abstentions (Armenia, Australia, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom, United States), with the Assembly emphasizing the urgent need to ensure the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and to facilitate universal health coverage.

When the Assembly turned to country-specific situations, the resolution on human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, generated spirited discussion before passing by a recorded vote of 65 in favour to 25 against, with 85 abstentions. By its terms, the Assembly condemned efforts by the Russian Federation to legitimize its attempted annexation of Crimea, through the automatic imposition of Russian citizenship, illegal election campaigns and suppression of national identity.

Speaking in explanation of vote, the Russian Federation's representative described the text as part of an anti-Russian campaign. After Crimea returned to the Russian Federation as the result of free vote, there has been a steady growth in revenues in the regional budget on the peninsula, while housing construction and industrial output are gathering pace. After the 2014 illegal water blockade of Crimea introduced by Kyiv, water security has become a priority, he stressed, pointing to 100 kilometres of new pipelines that have already been provided.

To that, Ukraine's delegate — pointing to the "Russian so-called peacemakers" in Syria, Georgia and Ukraine — said the Russian Federation pretends that its troops are not in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. However, even the Russian courts decided that the troops are there. As the population in the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea faces repression and hopelessness, systematic human

abuses have turned Crimea into a land of fear, not a land of tourism, as the Russian delegate said. The indigenous people expelled from their homeland by the Stalin regime have again become a direct target of terror.

The Assembly deferred action on three draft resolutions related to countering disinformation, the human rights situation in Syria and the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Earlier in the day, the General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution proclaiming 2022 the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development.

It also elected Finland to fill the vacancy left on the Economic and Social Council left by the relinquishment by Norway of its seat before the end of its term. It then went on to elect Bulgaria and the Dominican Republic as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission. It also appointed new members to the Board of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, followed by an election of members of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent.

Also speaking today were representatives of Kyrgyzstan, Finland, Russian Federation, Iran, Indonesia, China, Malaysia, Guatemala, Pakistan, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Uganda, Bangladesh, Zambia, Guinea, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Belarus.

#### Elections of Member of Economic and Social Council, Subsidiary Organs

Taking up its agenda item on the election of members of the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly held a by-election to fill a vacancy resulting from Norway relinquishing its seat before the end of its term. Considering a 30 November 2021 note verbale from the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations (document [A/76/53](#)), the Assembly noted that Germany, in its capacity as Chair of the Group of Western European and Other States for the month of November, endorsed the candidature of Finland to fill the vacant seat, commencing 1 January 2022 until the end of the term, 31 December 2022.

By secret ballot, the Assembly then elected Finland to fill the vacancy, by a vote exceeding the required two-thirds majority.

#### Voting Results for Economic and Social Council

##### Western European and Other States (1 seat)

Number of ballot papers:	185
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	185
Abstentions:	5
Number of Members present and voting:	180
Required majority:	120

##### Number of votes obtained:

Finland	179
Liechtenstein	1

Next, the Assembly resumed consideration of its agenda item on the election of members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Secretary-General's related note (document [A/76/364/Add.1](#)), filling outstanding vacancies by electing the Dominican Republic for a term beginning on 16 December 2021 and expiring on 31 December 2023, and France for a term from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024.

It then turned to its agenda item on the election of members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission. It noted that the Organizational Committee shall comprise seven Security Council members; seven Economic and Social Council members elected from regional groups; five top providers of assessed contributions to United Nations budgets and voluntary contributions to United Nations funds, programmes and agencies; five top providers of military personnel and civilian police to United Nations missions; and seven additional members elected by the General Assembly.

The Assembly then decided to elect Bulgaria and the Dominican Republic as members for two-year terms beginning on 1 January

Turning to its agenda item on the appointment of members of the Board of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, the Assembly appointed Costa Rica, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Mauritius, Senegal, Sweden and the State of Palestine for terms beginning on 16 December 2021 and ending on 15 September 2023.

The Assembly then took up its agenda item on the election of members of the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent. Moving to elect, for the first time, five members to the Permanent Forum, it first noted that in accordance with resolution 75/314 of 2 August 2021, the Permanent Forum shall consist of 10 members: 5 nominated by Governments, based on equitable geographical distribution and elected by the General Assembly, and 5 appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council. Further to that resolution's provisions, membership shall take into account the diversity and geographical distribution of people of African descent in the world, ensuring gender parity as well as the principles of transparency, representivity and equal opportunity, and all members shall serve in their personal capacity as independent experts on related issues for a period of three years with the possibility of re-election or reappointment for one further period. The initial three-year term of the five members elected by the General Assembly will begin on the date when five other members are appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council.

By secret ballot, the Assembly then elected Costa Rica, Saint Lucia, United States, Kenya and Egypt.

#### Voting Results for the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent

Number of ballot papers:	189
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	189
Abstentions:	1
Number of Members present and voting:	188
Required majority:	95

#### Number of votes obtained:

Kenya	149
United States	138
Saint Lucia	128
Egypt	123
Costa Rica	113
Togo	111
Russian Federation	79
Ecuador	43

#### International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development, 2022: Action on Draft

The Assembly considered the draft resolution titled "International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development, 2022" (document A/76/L.28). By its terms, the Assembly would proclaim 2022 the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development, and invite all Member States, the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations and relevant stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and academia, to observe it in order to increase awareness of related issues.

The representative of Kyrgyzstan, introducing "L.28", said that mountains are habitat for unique species of flora and fauna and that mountain countries constitute unique types of ecosystems and the problems they face due to climate change are specific. Therefore, adaptation and mitigation of climate change, as well as sustainable development in these countries, require the implementation of a special set of measures addressing their needs. The draft resolution invites all Member States and international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders to observe the International Year to increase awareness of the importance of sustainable mountain development. The Proclamation of International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development not only recognizes the need for preserving the global life support system that is indispensable to the survival of the global ecosystem, but also provides a sound basis for further substantive work on mountain development thus having a truly global significance for the future of mankind he said

Acting without a vote, the Assembly then adopted “L.28”.

### Action on Third Committee Draft Resolutions

MARIA-IULIANA NICULAE (Romania), Rapporteur of the Third Committee, introduced the following reports of that body: Social development (document [A/76/454](#)); Advancement of women (document [A/76/455](#)); Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (document [A/76/456](#)); Report of the Human Rights Council (document [A/76/457](#)); Promotion and protection of the rights of children (document [A/76/458](#)); Rights of indigenous peoples (document [A/76/459](#)); Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (document [A/76/460](#)); and Right of peoples to self-determination (document [A/76/461](#)).

She went on to present the Committee’s reports on: Promotion and protection of human rights (document [A/76/462](#)); Implementation of human rights instruments (document [A/76/462/Add.1](#)); Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (document [A/76/462/Add.2](#)); Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (document [A/76/462/Add.3](#)); Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (document [A/76/462/Add.4](#)); Crime prevention and criminal justice (document [A/76/463](#)); Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes (document [A/76/464](#)); International drug control (document [A/76/465](#)); Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (document [A/76/468](#)); and Programme planning (document [A/76/469](#)).

The Assembly began by taking up the report on Social Development, which contained 10 draft resolutions.

It adopted the first four resolutions without a vote, namely:

Draft resolution I, “Persons with Albinism”, encouraging Member States to end impunity for violence against persons with albinism, including sexual and gender-based violence, by amending laws and bringing perpetrators to justice, as well as to address the causes of such violence, including through awareness-raising and the dissemination of accurate information on albinism in education curricula. It also called on them to ensure accountability through the conduct of impartial, speedy and effective investigations into crimes and attacks against persons with albinism, to hold perpetrators accountable and to ensure that victims, survivors and family members have access to appropriate remedies;

Draft resolution II, “Fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Volunteers programme and twentieth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers” without a vote, encouraging Member States to support volunteer action for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, expressing support for the participation of youth, older persons, women, migrants, refugees, persons with disabilities and minorities in such efforts. It requested United Nations country teams to reflect the contributions of volunteering in Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, and further, that Member States and the United Nations work with civil society to enhance the protection of volunteers;

**Draft resolution III, “Addressing the challenges of persons living with a rare disease and their families” as orally revised, calling on Member States to strengthen health systems in efforts to provide universal access to a range of health care services, empower persons living with a rare disease to address their physical and mental health needs, enhance health equity and equality, end discrimination, eliminate coverage gaps and create a more inclusive society. The Assembly also urged Member States to implement national measures to ensure that persons living with a rare disease are not left behind, recognizing that they are often disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and lack of decent work and employment. It requested the Secretary-General, in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General, to present a related report during the seventy-eighth session; and**

Draft resolution IV, “Inclusive social development policies and programmes to address homelessness, including in the aftermath of COVID-19”, urging Member States to eliminate all forms of discrimination against individuals experiencing homelessness. Member States were also urged to decriminalize homelessness and to foster social integration for young people, people with disabilities, migrants and indigenous people. The Assembly further called on them to address the structural drivers of homelessness, including inequalities, poverty, a loss of housing and livelihood as well as a lack of decent job opportunities, access to affordable housing, social protection, land access, and the high costs of energy and health care. The Assembly requested the Statistical Commission to establish global indicators on access to adequate housing, as well as statistics to monitor homelessness.

By a recorded vote of 184 in favour to 2 against (United States, Israel), with no abstentions, the Assembly then adopted draft resolution V, “Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly”.

By the text, the Assembly expressed deep concern that the global goal of eradicating poverty by 2030 is “slipping from our reach”, as the multidimensional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this trend, increasing the number of poor by up to 124 million and causing the extreme poverty rate to rise for the first time in a generation, especially among women and girls. It called on Member States to adopt measures to recognize women’s and girls’ disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and the feminization of poverty.

Recognizing the complex character of the food insecurity situation, including food price volatility, the Assembly more broadly urged States to support the efforts of least developed countries to realize the right to education for every girl through appropriate resources.

Moving on, the Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution VI, “Cooperatives in social development”, requesting the Secretary-General to continue to render support to Member States in their efforts to create a supportive environment for the development of cooperatives into educational programming through conferences, workshops and seminars at the national and regional levels.

By other terms, it encouraged Governments to adopt policies that provide women with equal access to land and to support women’s cooperatives and agricultural programmes, while enabling women’s cooperatives to benefit from public and private sector procurement processes. At the same time, it invited Governments to strengthen efforts to enhance food security, nutrition and sustainable production and consumption and to focus efforts on relevant stakeholders including smallholders and women farmers.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution VII, “Promoting social integration through social inclusion”, stressing that Member States should prioritize the creation of a “society for all”, based on respect for human rights and the principles of equality among individuals. Against that backdrop, it called on Member States to advance bold actions to address the social, economic and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, promote more equitable participation in and access to economic growth gains through policies that ensure inclusive labour markets, and to accelerate efforts to close the digital divide.

Next, the Assembly adopted without a vote draft resolution VIII, “Policies and Programmes involving Youth”. By the text, the Assembly decided to convene a one-day high-level plenary meeting during the general debate of its eightieth session in 2025 to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth. It requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session on progress achieved in implementing youth-related areas of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Recognizing that 49 per cent of the world’s population is under 30 and only 2.6 per cent of parliament members belong to this age group, the Assembly encouraged the increase of youth representation in national and local legislatures. By other terms, it invited Member States to engage civil society, in particular youth organizations, to develop joint environmental policies and programmes aimed at countering climate change and biodiversity loss in developing countries. At the same time, it called on Member States to protect the right to privacy in the digital age and take measures to prevent cyberstalking and cyberbullying.

Next, the Assembly adopted without a vote draft resolution IX, “Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing”, reaffirming the 2002 Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, emphasizing the need to view older persons as active contributors to society and not as passive receivers of care and assistance and an “impending burden on welfare systems and economies”. It called on Member States to participate in global efforts towards an age-inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to mobilize all necessary resources. By other terms, the Assembly called on Member States to develop their national capacities for monitoring and enforcing the rights of older persons, in consultation with all sectors of society. In addition, it urged States to implement policies that promote healthy and active ageing and the highest attainable standard of health and wellbeing for older persons.

The Assembly next adopted without a vote draft resolution X, “Preparations for and observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family”, requesting the focal point on the family, in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to enhance collaboration with the regional commissions, funds and programmes, while inviting Member States to enhance cooperation with all relevant stakeholders to promote family issues and develop partnerships. In addition, the Assembly encouraged Member States to invest in family-oriented policies and programmes that enhance intergenerational interactions, such as intergenerational living arrangements, parenting education, including for family caregivers, and support for grandparents.

The Assembly next took up the report on Advancement of Women (document A/76/455), which contained three draft resolutions.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution I, “Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas”, urging Member States to attach greater importance to improving the situation of these women by creating an enabling environment for ensuring systematic attention to their needs, providing access to universally accessible primary health care and, notably, ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

By further terms, the Assembly urged States to pursue the political and socioeconomic empowerment of rural women and support their full and equal participation in decision-making through affirmative action and promoting and protecting their right to vote and to be elected. It also stressed the need to identify best practices for ensuring that rural women have access to and equal participation in the area of information and communications technology (ICT) and to ensure their participation in developing and implementing related global, regional and national strategies, taking educational measures to eliminate gender stereotypes about women in the field of technology.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution II, “Violence against women migrant workers”, by which it urged States to develop and implement legislation and policies to prevent and respond to gender-related killing of women and girls, including femicide,

while also considering the particular difficulties faced by women migrant workers in accessing justice. Among other actions, the Assembly called upon States to address the structural and underlying causes of violence against women migrant workers, including through education and dissemination of information, raising awareness of gender equality issues, promoting their economic empowerment and access to decent work and, where relevant, their integration into the formal economy, in particular in economic decision-making. In addition, it urged all States to end the arbitrary arrest and detention of women migrant workers and take action to prevent and punish any form of illegal deprivation of the liberty of women migrant workers by individuals or groups.

The Assembly next adopted without a vote draft resolution III, “Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly”, by which it called on States parties to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, reaffirming that they are obliged to exercise due diligence to prevent and combat violence against women and girls. At the United Nations, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to accelerate efforts to achieve a 50-50 gender balance at all levels throughout the Organization, while requesting United Nations entities to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on women personnel and to share the information with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

By other terms, the Assembly strongly encouraged Governments to continue to support civil society’s contribution to implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the outcome of the twenty-third special session and the 2030 Agenda. It also urged Governments to increase funding for the budget of UN-Women, encouraging them more broadly to make ambitious commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

The Assembly then took up the Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions, which contained two draft resolutions.

The Assembly then turned to draft resolution I, “Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees”.

The representative of Finland, speaking in explanation of vote before the vote on behalf of the Nordic countries, said the resolution is an annual text supporting the humanitarian mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It enables the Office to work for the benefit of those forcibly displaced. After last year’s technical rollover, there were substantial negotiations on several issues. The resolution reiterates the call for international solidarity and responsibility sharing in accordance with the Global Compact on Refugees. It contains new elements, for example on COVID-19 and climate change. It received solid support from an overwhelming number of Member States and 81 countries have co-sponsored it, she said, expressing regret that a vote has been called. At a time when humanitarian needs continue to grow, more unity is needed, she said, asking all Member States to vote in favour of the resolution.

A recorded vote was requested.

The Assembly then adopted the resolution by a recorded vote of 180 in favour to none against, with 5 abstentions (Eritrea, Hungary, Iran, Libya, Syria).

By the text, the Assembly urged States that are parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol to respect their obligations and called on States and other stakeholders to contribute to burden- and responsibility-sharing to broaden the support base, in a spirit of international solidarity.

By other terms, the Assembly strongly condemned attacks on refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and internally displaced persons, and similarly deplored the growing number of incidents of refoulement and unlawful expulsion of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as the denial of access to asylum. As such, it called on States to respect the principles of refugee protection and to uphold the civilian and humanitarian character of camps and settlements for refugees and internally displaced persons through effective measures to prevent the infiltration of armed elements. In addition, the Assembly called upon States to process asylum applications by identifying those in need of international protection, and to ensure that the humanitarian needs of persons of concern are addressed as components of humanitarian response.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution II, “Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa”.

By the text, the Assembly called on African States that have not yet signed or ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa to consider doing so as early as possible to ensure its wider implementation. Noting with great concern that the situation of refugees and displaced persons in Africa remains precarious, and that the number of refugees and internally displaced persons has dramatically increased, the Assembly called on States and other parties to armed conflict to scrupulously observe international humanitarian law. It condemned the refoulement, unlawful expulsion and physical attacks against refugees and asylum seekers and called on States to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection.

In addition, the Assembly called on the international community to contribute generously to projects and programmes aimed at alleviating the plight of refugees, returnees and displaced persons. The High Commissioner for Refugees, among others, were called on to

intensify support to African Governments through capacity-building activities, with the Assembly appealing to the international community to respond positively to the third-country resettlement needs of African refugees, in the spirit of burden- and responsibility-sharing.

The Assembly next took up the Report of the Human Rights Council, containing one draft resolution of the same name.

By a recorded vote of 118 in favour to 2 against (Belarus, Israel), with 61 abstentions, the Assembly then adopted draft resolution I contained therein titled, “Report of the Human Rights Council”, taking note of the report, including the addendum thereto and its recommendations.

The Assembly next took up the report on Promotion and protection of the rights of children, which contained two draft resolutions.

Turning to draft resolution I, “The girl child”, the Assembly adopted it without a vote, thereby urging States to consider signing and ratifying or acceding to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). It called on States to take steps to bridge the gender digital divide in efforts to ensure the empowerment of women and girls, particularly those living in rural areas. States were also called on to promote educational and health practices that foster a culture in which menstruation is recognized as healthy and natural, and in which girls are not stigmatized on this basis.

By other terms, the Assembly recognized that girls’ school attendance can be affected by negative perceptions of menstruation and lack of means to maintain safe personal hygiene, such as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools. It called on States to develop policies that prioritize scientifically accurate and age-appropriate education, relevant to cultural contexts, providing adolescent girls and boys and young women and men in and out of school with information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, gender equality and women’s empowerment, human rights, physical, psychological and pubertal development and power in relationships between women and men. Further, it urged all States to enact, uphold and strictly enforce laws aimed at preventing and ending child, early and forced marriage, as well as laws concerning the minimum legal age of consent and the minimum age for marriage.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution II, “Rights of the Child”, calling on State parties to increase their efforts to fully implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child, while urging them to withdraw reservations that are incompatible with that instrument or the Optional Protocols thereto.

In that context, the Assembly strongly condemned all forms of violence against children in all settings, including: physical, psychological and sexual violence, torture, child abuse, hostage-taking, domestic violence, incest, trafficking in or sale of children and their organs, child prostitution, child pornography, child sex tourism, gang and armed violence, child sexual exploitation online and offline, bullying and such harmful practices as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage. It urged States to strengthen efforts to protect children from all such violence through a gender-responsive and age-appropriate approach.

By further terms, the Assembly made a series of requests, first and foremost of the Secretary-General to submit a report outlining the status of the Convention, with a focus on the digital environment. He was also requested to submit to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, from 2022, a biennial report on the follow-up to the outcome of the Assembly’s special session on children, focusing on children and the Sustainable Development Goals. The report would serve as an input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development and drafted by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

The Assembly next took up the report the rights of indigenous peoples, containing one draft resolution of the same name.

Acting without a vote, the Assembly adopted draft resolution I, deciding to continue to observe the International Day of Indigenous Peoples every year on 9 August and requesting the Secretary-General to support its observance from within existing resources. It urged Governments and the United Nations, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples through their representatives and institutions, to continue to implement national measures to achieve the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to promote awareness of it throughout society. Stressing the urgent need to strengthen resilience and reduce the vulnerability of indigenous peoples to climate change, the Assembly also supported their leadership, knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts to address such phenomena.

The Assembly next took up the report on “Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”, containing two draft resolutions.

By a recorded vote of 130 in favour to 2 against (Ukraine, United States), with 49 abstentions, the Assembly then adopted draft resolution I, “Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”.

By its terms, the Assembly expressed deep concern about the glorification of the Nazi movement, neo-Nazism and former members of the Waffen SS organization, including by erecting monuments and memorials, holding public demonstrations in the name of the glorification of the Nazi past, the Nazi movement and neo-Nazism, and declaring or attempting to declare such members and those who

fought against the anti-Hitler coalition, collaborated with the Nazi movement and committed war crimes and crimes against humanity “participants in national liberation movements”.

Further, the Assembly urged States to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination by all appropriate means, including through legislation, urging them to address new and emerging threats posed by the rise in terrorist attacks incited by racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief. It would call on States to ensure that education systems develop the necessary content to provide accurate accounts of history, as well as promote tolerance and other international human rights principles. It likewise would condemn without reservation any denial of or attempt to deny the Holocaust, as well as any manifestation of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities on the basis of ethnic origin or religious belief.

The Assembly next took up the report on “Right of peoples to self-determination”, which contained three draft resolutions.

By a recorded vote of 168 in favour to 5 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, United States), with 10 abstentions (Australia, Cameroon, Honduras, Kiribati, Lithuania, Palau, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Tonga), the Assembly then adopted the draft resolution I, “The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination”, urging all States and United Nations specialized agencies and organizations to continue to support the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination. It also reaffirmed the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination, including to their independent State of Palestine.

By a recorded vote of 128 in favour to 52 against, with 6 abstentions (Colombia, Liberia, Mexico, Palau, Switzerland, Tonga), the Assembly adopted the draft resolution II, “Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination”, urging States to take legislative measures to ensure that their territories and those under their control are not used for — and that their nationals do not take part in — the recruitment, assembly, financing, training, protection or transit of mercenaries for the planning of activities designed to impede the right of peoples to self-determination.

Nor should such territories be used to destabilize or overthrow the Government of any State or to dismember or impair — totally or in part — the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States conducting themselves in accordance with the right of peoples to self-determination. The Assembly also called on States to investigate the possibility of mercenary involvement whenever and wherever criminal acts of a terrorist nature occur and to bring to trial those found responsible or to consider their extradition, if so requested, in accordance with national law and applicable bilateral or international treaties.

The Assembly next adopted without a vote draft resolution III, “Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination”, declaring its firm opposition to acts of foreign military intervention, aggression and occupation, since these have resulted in suppression of the right to self-determination and other human rights. By other terms, the Assembly deplored the plight of millions of refugees and displaced persons who have been uprooted and reaffirms their right to return to their homes voluntarily in safety.

The Assembly next took up the report on “Promotion and protection of human rights”, which contained one draft resolution.

Acting without a vote, the Assembly then adopted draft resolution I, “The human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation”, reaffirming that these rights are essential for the full enjoyment of the right to life and all human rights. It called on Member States to prioritize the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation services that are accessible to all, including persons in vulnerable situations and in densely populated, impoverished and rural areas.

In particular, the Assembly called on States to ensure access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate, equitable sanitation and hygiene for all women and girls, as well as for menstrual hygiene management, including for hygiene facilities and services in public and private spaces. They were also called on to address the widespread stigma and shame surrounding menstruation and menstrual hygiene by promoting educational and health practices in and out of schools as a way to foster a culture in which menstruation is recognized as healthy and natural.

The Assembly next took up the report on “Implementation of human rights instruments”, which contained one draft resolution.

The Assembly adopted without a vote draft resolution I, “Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto: participation”, requesting United Nations agencies and organizations to strengthen efforts to disseminate accessible information on the Convention and the Optional Protocol and to assist States parties in implementing their obligations. It took note of the Secretary-General’s 2020 policy brief on disability-inclusive COVID-19 response and recovery in which States are encouraged to place persons with disabilities at the centre of the response, prohibiting any form of discrimination. By other terms, the Assembly urged States to take steps to eliminate intersecting forms of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities through repealing discriminatory laws and policies, and by taking measures to remove barriers faced by them in accessing the physical, social, economic and cultural environment, transportation, health and education and information and communications.

The Assembly next took up the report on “Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms”, which contained 23 draft resolutions.

By a recorded vote of 185 in favour to 1 against (Syria), with 1 abstention (Iran), the Assembly adopted draft resolution I, “United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region”. By the text, the Assembly encouraged the Centre’s continued engagement with other United Nations regional offices to strengthen its work and to avoid duplication. Encouraging Member States to provide voluntary contributions to the Centre, the Assembly underlined its role as a source of regional expertise, as well as the need to meet an increasing number of requests for training and documentation, including in Arabic.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution II, “Freedom of religion or belief”, strongly condemning violence and acts of terrorism against persons belonging to religious minorities on the basis of or in the name of religion or belief. It urged States to step up their efforts to protect and promote freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, ensuring that constitutional and legislative systems provide effective guarantees of these freedoms. The Assembly also urged States to ensure the right of all persons to worship, assemble or teach in connection with a religion or belief, their right to establish and maintain places for these purposes and the right of all persons to seek, receive and impart information and ideas in these areas.

Next, the Assembly adopted draft resolution III, “Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief”, calling for strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels based on respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs. In line with the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Assembly called on States to foster a domestic environment of religious tolerance, peace and respect by encouraging the creation of collaborative networks, creating an appropriate mechanism to identify areas of tension between members of different religious communities and encouraging the training of Government officials in outreach strategies, among other measures.

The Assembly then adopted draft resolution IV, “International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance”, recognizing the importance of the Convention and requesting the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to increase their intensive efforts to assist States in becoming parties to it. Welcoming that 98 States have signed the Convention and 64 have ratified or acceded to it, the Assembly called on States that have not yet done so to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to the Convention as a matter of priority. It also recognized the importance of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance as a body of principles designed to punish enforced disappearances, prevent their commission and help victims and their families to seek fair, prompt and adequate reparation.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution V, “Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights”, urging States to enhance bilateral, regional and international cooperation in addressing the adverse impact of “consecutive and compounded global crises” — among them, financial and economic crises, food crises, climate change and natural disasters — on the full enjoyment of human rights. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to consult States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations on ways and means to overcome obstacles for the enhancement of international cooperation in the United Nations human rights machinery.

By a recorded vote of 130 in favour to 52 against, with no abstentions, the Assembly then adopted draft resolution VI, “Promotion of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies”, recommending, when considering the possible allocation of seats on each treaty body on a regional basis, the introduction of flexible procedures, with criteria outlining that each of the five regional groups is allocated seats in equivalent proportion to the number of States parties to the instrument in that group. Further, there must be provision for periodic revisions of the allocation of seats in order to reflect relative changes in the level of treaty ratification in each regional group, while automatic periodic revisions should be envisaged in order to avoid amending the text of the instrument when the quotas are revised.

By a recorded vote of 131 in favour to 54 against, with no abstentions, the Assembly then adopted draft resolution VII, “Human rights and unilateral coercive measures”, strongly urging States to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law. It also condemned the inclusion of Member States in unilateral lists under false pretexts, which are contrary to international law, including false allegations of terrorism sponsorship, considering such lists as instruments for political or economic pressure against Member States, particularly developing countries.

In addition, the Assembly strongly objected to the extraterritorial nature of those measures, which threaten the sovereignty of States. It called on all Member States neither to recognize nor apply them — and further — to take administrative or legislative measures to counteract the extraterritorial applications or effects of unilateral coercive measures. By other terms, the Assembly rejected all attempts to introduce unilateral coercive measures and urge the Human Rights Council to take fully into account their negative impact in its task concerning the implementation of the right to development.

By a recorded vote of 131 in favour to 55 against, with no abstentions, the Assembly then adopted draft resolution VIII, “Human rights and cultural diversity”. By the text, the Assembly affirmed the importance for all peoples and nations to hold, develop and preserve their cultural heritage and traditions in a national and international atmosphere of peace, tolerance and mutual respect, emphasizing the important contribution of culture to the Sustainable Development Goals. It expressed its determination to prevent and mitigate cultural homogenization in the context of globalization, through increased intercultural exchange.

By other terms, it requested the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and invited the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to support initiatives aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue on human rights, while urging States to ensure that their political and legal systems reflect the multicultural diversity within their societies and, where necessary, to improve democratic institutions.

By a recorded vote of 131 in favour to 24 against, with 29 abstentions, the Assembly then adopted draft resolution IX, “The right to development”, requesting the Human Rights Council, to lead the raising of the right to development — as set out in paragraphs 5 and 10 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action — to the same level as all other human rights and fundamental freedoms. It supported realization of the Working Group on the Right to Development, recognizing the need to overcome the political impasse within the Working Group and to fulfil its mandate, as established by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1998/72 and the Human Rights Council in its resolution 4/4 of 30 March 2007.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution X, “Strengthening United Nations action in the field of human rights through the promotion of international cooperation and the importance of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity”, reaffirming that it is a purpose of the United Nations — and the task of all Member States — to encourage respect for all human rights and to remain vigilant to violations, wherever they occur. An unbiased and fair approach to human rights issues contributes to the promotion of international cooperation and to the realization of all human rights.

By other terms, the Assembly requested the Human Rights Council to consider proposals for the strengthening of United Nations action in the field of human rights through the promotion of international cooperation and the importance of the principles of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity. It also requested the Secretary-General to present further practical proposals towards that goal and called on Member States to base their activities for the promotion and protection of human rights on the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

By a recorded vote of 124 in favour to 54 against, with 9 abstentions (Armenia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Liberia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay), the Assembly then adopted draft resolution XI, “Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order”, affirming that everyone is entitled to a democratic and equitable international order, which fosters the full realization of all human rights. It called on Member States to maximize the benefits of globalization by strengthening international cooperation to increase equality of opportunities for trade, economic growth and sustainable development, for global communications — through the use of new technologies — and for increased intercultural exchange, by preserving and promoting cultural diversity.

By further terms, the Assembly affirmed that such a world order requires realizing the rights to self-determination, to permanent sovereignty over wealth and resources, to development, to peace and to an international economic order based on equal participation in decision-making. It stressed the importance of preserving the rich and diverse nature of the international community of nations and peoples, as well as respect for national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds.

By a recorded vote of 186 in favour to 2 against (Israel, United States), with no abstentions, the Assembly then adopted draft resolution XII, “The right to food”, reaffirming that hunger constitutes an outrage and a violation of human dignity, requiring the adoption of urgent measures at the national, regional and international levels for its elimination. It expressed concern that the effects created by the world food crisis continue to have serious consequences for the poorest and most vulnerable people, particularly in many net food-importing countries.

By other terms, the Assembly considered it alarming that, in 2020, the number of people lacking access to adequate food rose by 320 million — to 2.4 billion — amounting to nearly a third of the world’s population, as estimated by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and that between 720 million and 811 million people faced hunger. Expressing deep concern that, while women contribute more than 50 per cent of the food produced worldwide, they account for 70 per cent of the world’s hungry, the Assembly called on States to support programmes aimed at combating undernutrition in mothers, and to eliminate preventable mortality and morbidity of children under 5 years of age. It also stressed the importance of fighting hunger in rural areas, including through national efforts supported by international partnerships to stop desertification and land degradation.

The Assembly next adopted without a vote draft resolution XIII, “Protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons”, by which it called on Governments to provide protection and assistance to internally displaced persons, including for reintegration, and to facilitate safe, unhindered access for humanitarian personnel and the delivery of supplies and equipment, notably by maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of camps and settlements. The Assembly expressed particular concern about the full range of threats and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law facing internally displaced persons, in particular, sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking, forced recruitment and abduction.

By other terms, the Assembly called on all parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law with a view to preventing forced displacement and to promoting the protection of civilians. In addition, it called on Governments to respect and protect the rights of all internally displaced persons, without distinction.

Moving on, the Assembly adopted without a vote draft resolution XIV, “Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities”, requesting its President to convene a high-level meeting to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, during the general debate of the seventy-seventh session. The Assembly called on States to ensure the protection of children who belong to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, and likewise to promote the empowerment of all women and girls who belong to these communities.

Next, the Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution XV, “Terrorism and human rights”, urging States to fully comply with their obligations under international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law regarding the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Further, the Assembly strongly condemned terrorist acts and all acts of violence committed by terrorist groups, including trafficking in persons, kidnapping and hostage-taking with demands for ransom and/or political concessions, as well as the systematic and widespread abuses perpetrated by such groups. It called on all Member States to prevent terrorists from benefiting from ransom payments and political concessions, and to secure the safe release of hostages, while noting the Algiers Memorandum on Good Practices on Preventing and Denying the Benefits of Kidnapping for Ransom by Terrorists in this context.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution XVI, “National human rights institutions”, stressing the importance of the financial and administrative independence and stability of national human rights institutions and noting the efforts of those States that have provided their national institutions with more autonomy and independence — including by giving them an investigative role or enhancing such a role. The Assembly encouraged other Governments to consider taking similar steps, stressing that the members and staff of national human rights institutions should not face reprisals or intimidation — notably in the form of political pressure, physical intimidation, harassment or unjustifiable budgetary limitations — as a result of activities undertaken in accordance with their mandates.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution XVII, “Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa”, encouraging the Centre to consider the demands of the countries of the subregion in the implementation of the strategic thematic priorities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It also encouraged the Centre to strengthen its cooperation with the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the United Nations country teams, as well as with the peacekeeping missions in the subregion. Further, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner to provide additional funds and human resources to enable the Centre to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Central Africa more rapidly.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution XVIII, “Protection of migrants”, expressing its concern about the impact of financial and economic crises, as well as natural disasters and the effects of climate-related phenomena, on international migration. It urged Governments to combat discriminatory treatment of migrants, to respect their human rights and inherent dignity, to end arbitrary arrest and detention and, bearing in mind the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, review policies that deny migrants full enjoyment of their rights.

By other terms, it encouraged States to take measures to achieve policy coherence on migration at the national, regional and international levels by ensuring coordinated child protection policies across borders that are in full compliance with international human rights law, as well as to cooperate in protecting witnesses in cases of smuggling of migrants and victims in cases of trafficking in persons. It urged States to combat all forms of discrimination, violence, xenophobia and related intolerance against migrants, while at the same time acknowledging the need to promote an open and evidence-based public discourse on migration and migrants, in partnership with all parts of society.

Acting again without a vote, the Assembly adopted draft resolution XIX, “Countering disinformation and promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms”, affirming the responsibility of States to counter the dissemination of disinformation, which undermines the promotion of peace and cooperation. It expressed concern about the spread of disinformation and propaganda, including on the Internet, which can be designed and implemented to mislead, violate human rights — including those to privacy and free expression — and to spread hate.

The Assembly therefore called on Member States and all relevant actors to promote inclusion and unity in response to COVID-19 and to prevent, speak out and take strong action against disinformation, racism, xenophobia, hate speech, violence, discrimination — including on the basis of age — and stigmatization. It also urged social media companies to review their business models and ensure that their operations, data collection and data processing practices comply with international human rights standards, and to conduct human rights impact assessments of their products, particularly of the role of algorithms and ranking systems in amplifying disinformation or misinformation.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution XX, “The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity”, strongly condemning the impunity for attacks and violence against journalists. It called on States to develop and implement effective legal frameworks and measures for the protection of journalists and media workers, and for combating impunity, taking a gender-responsive approach. States must pay attention to the safety of journalists covering events in which persons are exercising their rights to peaceful

assembly and freedom of expression. States also were called upon to create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference, notably by means of legislative measures and the regular monitoring and reporting of attacks against journalists, as well as publicly and systematically condemning online and offline attacks, harassment and violence against journalists and media workers.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution XXI, “Implementing the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms through providing a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders and ensuring their protection, including in the context of and recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic” (document A/C.3/76/L.51/Rev.1). By its terms, the Assembly called on States to ensure that COVID-related emergency measures are not misused to endanger the safety of human rights defenders or unduly hinder their work. States must ensure that the criminalization and prosecution of terrorism or national security offences are in accordance with their obligations under international human rights, and both develop and implement appropriate and effective protection mechanisms for human rights defenders at risk or in vulnerable situations.

By a recorded vote of 179 in favour to none against, with 7 abstentions (Armenia, Australia, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom, United States), the Assembly then adopted draft resolution XXII, “Ensuring equitable, affordable, timely and universal access for all countries to vaccines in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic”, emphasizing the urgent need to ensure the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and to facilitate the development of robust health systems and universal health coverage. These systems would encompass universal and equitable access to all essential health technologies, diagnostics, medicines and vaccines, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further, the Assembly requested States and international organizations to commit to transparency in all matters relating to the production, distribution and fair pricing of vaccines, in accordance with national and regional legal frameworks, urging States to prevent speculation and stockpiling. Member States were also urged to promote an enhanced response to future pandemics, based on the lessons learned from COVID-19, by strengthening the capacities required under the International Health Regulations (2005) and by considering the benefits of developing a WHO convention or other international instruments on pandemic preparedness and response.

Acting without a vote, the Assembly then adopted draft resolution XXIII, “Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization”, requesting the United Nations to continue to ensure that there is adequate time to organize and carry out an effective mission providing electoral assistance. It requested the Secretary-General to provide the Electoral Assistance Division with adequate human and financial resources, and the United Nations Development Programme to continue its democratic governance assistance programmes. Member States were called on to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others and to consider ways to increase the representation of all youth in decision-making at all levels.

The representative of the Russian Federation, speaking in explanation after the vote, welcomed the attempt of the United States delegation to address the issue of the promotion of democratization and enhancing elections. He condemned the removal from power of democratically elected officials, as was the case in 2014 in Ukraine. He then asked why the resolution includes a mention of “sexual orientation and gender identity” and “women in all their diversity”, which are not recognized at the international level. “What, in your country, do you have to confirm your sexual orientation when you go to pick up your ballot paper?” he asked, noting that the Russian Federation will disassociate from consensus on preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7.

The representative of Belarus, speaking in explanation of vote, acknowledged the importance of the resolution’s topic. Noting that in previous years, Belarus has supported consensus and voted in favour, he said his delegation is now unable to do so. The text is full of contradictory and vague wording that aggressively advances concepts that have not been agreed upon at the international level. He called for respect and understanding for Member States’ positions and the avoidance of terminology that leads to division, underscoring that Belarus will disassociate from the resolution.

The representative of Iran said that her delegation has joined consensus on the resolution, as the Government is committed to human rights and democracy and holding genuine, fair and inclusive elections. However, it disassociated from the contentious terms in preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7 referring to “women in all their diversity” and sexual orientation and gender identity.

The representative of Egypt said his delegation joined consensus on the resolution but will not co-sponsor it because of controversial language in preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7. He reaffirmed Egypt’s commitment to fight discrimination against all citizens, including their right to participate in public affairs. However, he rejected attempts to undermine the text with vague concepts, including “individual conduct”, which fall outside the international human rights framework and shows disrespect for cultural norms. His delegation made many suggestions to amend the controversial language. Those suggested for the terms “women in all their diversity”, “gender identity” and “sexual orientation” garnered the support of 58 countries, he said, noting that Egypt disassociated from these paragraphs.

The representative of Indonesia said his delegation joined consensus on the resolution because democracy is key to building lasting peace. However, he expressed concern that the resolution contains the phrase “in all their diversity” even when some countries expressed reservations. He rejected references to the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” as they are not agreed-upon language.

The representative of China said democracy is the shared value. She expressed support for the United Nations provision of technical support to Member States, upon their request, for the holding of democratic elections.

The representative of Saudi Arabia said that God created man and woman, male and female, underscoring that what is not male and female is “against nature”. On the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity”, he said such terminology is against Saudi Arabia’s history, as well as the voice and legislation of many countries.

The representative of Malaysia said his country has a good system of governance in place. As a nation that is 64 years old, it recognizes the need for inclusive and participatory governance systems. Regrettably, with the inclusion of non-consensual terms, his delegation is unable to co-sponsor the text, and thus disassociated from paragraphs that use the terms “all their diversity”, “sexual orientation” and “gender identity”, as they are vague and inconsistent with Malaysia’s position. However, Malaysia has joined consensus in the larger spirit of the resolution, he added.

The representative of Guatemala said his country joined consensus, recognizing the importance of democracy as a universal value. The Government defends human rights that are recognized in international agreements for all of its citizens and does not discriminate on any grounds. Guatemala disassociated from preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7, which contravene national legislation and the recent public protection policy for life and families.

The representative of Jordan said her delegation supported the resolution. However, she expressed reservations on preambular paragraph 25, as it does not match national law. A State is under no obligation to grant nationality to an individual born on its territory, she explained. On preambular paragraph 9, she said Jordan is not bound by anything beyond its national laws.

The representative of Pakistan said free and fair elections are a cornerstone of a democratic process. However, non-consensual language was kept in preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7, which is not recognized by the national laws of her country. Pakistan therefore disassociated from the terms “all their diversity”, “sexual orientation” and “gender identity”.

The representative of Nigeria said that while his country joined consensus, the resolution is being used to bring in non-consensual elements, including the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” and diversity. Nigeria joined other Member States to call for amendments, which did not succeed. His delegation therefore disassociates from preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7.

The representative of Senegal said the holding of free and transparent elections contributes to the democratic life and promotes social development. While Senegal has always supported the goals of the resolution, his delegation now opposes non-agreed-upon language on gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as on “women in all their diversity” and will thus disassociate from preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7.

The representative of Libya said his delegation joined consensus, as the resolution concerns an important subject for his country. However, that does not mean that Libya accepts disputed terms that do not add to the value of the text. The phrases “women in all their diversity”, “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” do not take into account Libya’s religious framework.

The representative of Ethiopia said his country joined consensus but disassociated from preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7 and is not bound by such references. Ethiopia’s commitment for equal participation is strong, but the language is not consensual. Imposing values on societies is unacceptable, he said.

The representative of Sudan, noting that his delegation joined consensus and reiterates support for the main content of the resolution, said it nonetheless disassociated from preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7, which contain contentious terms that do not consider cultural and religious values or national legislation.

The representative of Syria said her delegation has always joined consensus. This is not the case this year, as it objects to language in preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7, both of which contain contentious terms of a “fluid, ambiguous and subjective character”. This should not be the case when seeking consensus and does not align with national legislation, she said, noting that her delegation disassociates from these paragraphs.

The representative of Yemen said his delegation joined the general consensus but disassociated from preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7, as they contain concepts that are not agreed-upon language, and contravene national legislation and religious and cultural customs.

The representative of Uganda said that while her delegation supports the objectives of the resolution, it has concerns over the use of non-agreed-upon language such as “all their diversity” and “sexual orientation and gender identity”. It therefore disassociates from

preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7.

The representative of Bangladesh said her delegation supports the objectives of the resolution. However, it contains language that conflicts with its national laws. As such, Bangladesh joined consensus but disassociated from preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7.

The representative of Zambia said his delegation supports the deepening of democratic values. However, it disagrees with the language in preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7 related to sexual orientation.

The representative of Guinea expressed regret that the resolution contains “non-agreed-upon concepts that could undermine our national identity”. Guinea therefore disassociated from preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7.

The representative of Algeria said her delegation joined consensus. However, it opposes the use of the terms “women in all their diversity” and “sexual orientation and gender identity”. The resolution used to be adopted by consensus, though it now contains language and concepts that are not commonly defined and contravene the religious and cultural values of many countries, she said, recalling that Algeria presented amendments to delete the non-agreed-upon concepts in preambular paragraph 9 and operative paragraph 7. Her delegation disassociated from these paragraphs.

The representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, in explanation of vote before the vote, condemned the “intolerable political provocation” against his country. The resolution is nothing but a typical manifestation of hostile policies and double standards, he asserted, adding that its forceful adoption proves that there is no change in the schemes of the hostile countries, which aim to interfere in internal affairs and overthrow social systems. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea remains firmly committed to the promotion and protection of human rights, he said, explaining that it will vote against all country-specific resolutions.

The representative of the Russian Federation, criticizing the use of blatant lies and dubious appeals, said his delegation will vote against all country-specific resolutions put to a vote and disassociate from consensus on these texts. Commenting on the “Ukrainian draft resolution” on Crimea, he said that after Crimea returned to the Russian Federation as the result of free vote, there has been a steady growth in revenues in the regional budget on the peninsula, while housing construction and industrial output are gathering pace. He emphasized that living standards among Crimeans remain a key socioeconomic development. On the energy blockade imposed against Crimea by Ukraine in 2015, he said temporary electricity provision schemes were set up and hundreds of generators were brought in. After the 2014 illegal water blockade of Crimea introduced by Kiev, the issue of water security has become a priority, he stressed, pointing to 100 kilometres of new pipelines that have already been provided. He also underscored that since 2015, more than 950 kilometres of roads have been refurbished in Crimea, and by 2024, the Russian Federation plans to modernize a further 2,000 kilometres of road surface. In 2018, construction was completed on the Crimean bridge. Moreover, in Russian Crimea — as opposed to Ukrainian Crimea — there is a clear linguistic equality and diversity, he asserted, describing the draft resolution on Crimea as a part of an anti-Russian campaign.

The representative of Ukraine expressed concern over persistent human rights violations caused by deliberate negligence that undermines international law. Pointing to the “Russian so-called peacemakers” in Syria, Georgia and Ukraine, he said the Russian Federation pretends that its troops are not in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. However, reports by international organizations clearly testify to the contrary. Even the Russian courts decided that the Russian troops are there. Since February 2014, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol have been temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation as a result of armed aggression against Ukraine. As the population in the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea faces repression and hopelessness, systematic human abuses have turned Crimea into a land of fear, not a land of tourism, as the Russian delegate said. The indigenous people expelled from their homeland by the Stalin regime have again become a direct target of terror, he underscored.

The representative of Belarus, criticizing biased wording and imbalanced approaches, disassociated from all country-specific resolutions adopted without a vote and underscored that his delegation will vote against those that will be put to a vote.

The representative of Iran fully rejected the resolution concerning her country and sponsored by Canada, as a political provocation. Calling for strict adherence to objectivity and non-selectivity and for the protection of human rights, she criticized countries that have engaged in colonialism, slavery and apartheid and now are lecturing others on human rights. The biggest threat to human rights comes from politicization and double standards, clearly reflected by the main proponents of this draft, she noted, pointing to the United Kingdom, the United States, Israel and Canada.

The representative of Saudi Arabia cautioned: “Do not believe if they say war is over in Syria”. The war has not ended, with 2,000 martyrs added this year. He asked what sort of victory it would be if their leader stood on the pyramid of corpses. Rebuilding should not be given priority; “priority should be given to the rebuilding of hearts”, he said. They are the first ones who opened their doors to receive Hezbollah, the leader of terrorism, and other terrorist organizations. Criticizing “those who have allowed waves of extremists and compromised Islamic and Arabic history”, he said the United Nations reports have shown that Syria’s Government is responsible for human rights violations in the country.

The Assembly adopted without a vote draft resolution I, “Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”, condemning in the strongest terms the long-standing systematic and widespread violations of human rights in and by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, including those that may amount to crimes against humanity, and the persistence of impunity. Citing findings by the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the Assembly condemned the systematic abduction, denial of repatriation and subsequent enforced disappearance of persons — including those from other countries — on a large scale and as a matter of State policy.

In this context, it strongly called on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to ensure the immediate return of all abductees, strongly urging it to immediately close political prison camps, release all political prisoners unconditionally and take steps to ensure that conditions in those facilities comply with commitments relating to the humane treatment of detainees. By other terms, the Assembly strongly urged the country immediately cease the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and ensure that citizens who are expelled or returned to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea are able to return in safety and dignity, and expressed concern at the failure of authorities to prosecute those responsible for violations, including violations the commission of inquiry has said may amount to crimes against humanity.

By a recorded vote of 78 in favour to 31 against, with 69 abstentions, the Assembly next adopted draft resolution II, “Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”.

The Assembly, welcoming Iran’s efforts to host one of the world’s largest refugee populations, adoption of a bill to protect children and adolescents, and engagement with human rights treaty bodies through its reports, at the same time expressed serious concern at the alarmingly high frequency of the death penalty, including against minors. It urged Iran to cease use of the death penalty and commute the sentences for child offenders on death row.

By other terms, the Assembly called on Iran to ensure, in law and in practice, that no one is subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as to cease the systematic use of arbitrary arrests and to release persons detained for the exercise of their fundamental freedoms. It further expressed serious concern at the restrictions on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and the use of excessive force related to the peaceful protests against water shortages in July 2021, and labour rights between March 2020 and July 2021. Further, the Assembly urged Iran to eliminate all discrimination against women and girls, calling for the release of women human rights defenders detained for exercising their rights.

By a recorded vote of 65 in favour to 25 against, with 85 abstentions, the Assembly adopted draft resolution III, “Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine”, deploring the failure of the Russian Federation to comply with its repeated requests and demands, and the 19 April 2017 order of the International Court of Justice. Strongly condemning attempts by the Russian Federation to legitimize or normalize its attempted annexation of Crimea — notably through the automatic imposition of Russian citizenship, illegal election campaigns and voting, population census, forcible change of the demographic structure of the population of Crimea and suppression of national identity — the Assembly urged it to take all measures to bring an immediate end to all violations against residents of Crimea.

Among other provisions, the Assembly urged the Russian Federation to respect the laws in force in Ukraine and repeal laws imposed by itself in Crimea that allow for forced evictions, as well as to uphold the rights of Ukrainian prisoners and detainees in Crimea and in the Russian Federation. It urged the Russian Federation to respect the right to freedom of religion or belief and guarantee its enjoyment by all residents of Crimea, and to lift discriminatory regulatory barriers prohibiting or limiting the activities of religious groups in Crimea. Further, it requested the Secretary-General to continue to seek ways and means to ensure safe and unfettered access to Crimea by established regional and international monitoring mechanisms.

The Assembly then adopted without a vote draft resolution IV, “Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar”, expressing grave concern at reports of serious human rights violations by the military and security forces, notably against Rohingya, including arbitrary arrests, deaths in detention, torture, deliberate killing and maiming of children, recruitment and use of children for forced labour and attacks on schools and hospitals. It strongly condemned all violations, including related to and following the declaration of the state of emergency on 1 February 2021, emphasizing the importance of conducting independent, fair and transparent investigations into sexual and gender-based violence, among other actions.

By other terms, the Assembly called on Myanmar’s security and armed forces to respect the democratic aspirations of the people by allowing for the democratic transition, ending the violence, fully respecting the rule of law and ending the state of emergency declared on 1 February 2021. Reiterating the urgent call on authorities to ensure the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return and reintegration of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, notably by creating conditions to do so, the Assembly also called on them to build trust among Rohingya Muslims in camps in Bangladesh through confidence-building measures, including by arranging “go and see” visits to Rakhine State by Rohingya representatives. It also requested the Secretary-General to pursue a series of actions, including providing his good offices to pursue related discussions.

The Assembly then deferred action on draft resolution V, “Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic”, which has programme budget implications requiring action from the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary).

The representative of Cuba, speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, said he did not support mandates and resolutions arising from politically motivated reasons that lack the support of the countries concerned. Therefore, he wished to disassociate from the resolution pertaining to human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Such exercises do not contribute positively to situations on the ground, and tend to be directed against developing countries, which are also subject to punishments such as unilateral coercive measures.

The representative of Venezuela reaffirmed his principled position against resolutions on the situation in specific countries, as they are selective and violate the purposes and principles section of the United Nations Charter. Therefore, he wished to disassociate from consensus on such resolutions, including the one on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The representative of China said her country disassociated from consensus on the resolutions on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Myanmar, and voted against other country-specific resolutions, due to its opposition to double standards and provocation, and to applying pressure on countries under the pretext of human rights, without the consent of the countries concerned.

The representative of Syria said country-specific resolutions are an exercise in double standards and must be avoided. Respectful dialogue must be enabled with countries, and their territorial integrity must be respected. Therefore, the universal periodic review is the best way to deal with human rights in all countries, and not by “launching lies with no basis”, including in the statement made by Saudi Arabia. Therefore, Syria voted against the resolutions targeting individual countries, and disassociated from the resolution on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The representative of Zimbabwe reiterated his country’s opposition to country-specific resolutions, which cause unnecessary acrimony and an atmosphere of confrontation, and are of a selective and divisive nature. Moreover, they do not assist in improving human rights concerns. Rather, they divide countries into two categories — the paragons, and those who are labelled as being “not like them”. Therefore, Zimbabwe voted against the country-specific resolutions, while remaining committed to the upholding of all human rights, including the right to development.

Under the agenda item “Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action”, the Assembly took note of the eponymous report of the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural).

Next, the Assembly took up the report titled “Crime prevention and criminal justice”, containing seven draft resolutions.

Acting without a vote, it adopted draft resolution I, “Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice”, requesting the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to review the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration, adopt the appropriate policy for the follow-up to that instrument and identify innovative ways to make use of information on progress made in the implementation of the Declaration.

By other terms, the Assembly expressed grave concern about the situation arising from the COVID–19 pandemic and its social and economic implications, which have transformed the modi operandi of criminals and organized criminal groups in different forms, and about the vulnerability of prisons to the real risk of a rapid spread of the virus in closed settings, which can be aggravated by long-standing challenges, such as prison overcrowding and poor prison conditions.

The Assembly then adopted draft resolution II, “Reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration”, requesting UNODC to convene an expert group meeting to share information on promising practices to reduce reoffending and to support the efforts of Member States to reduce reoffending through the promotion of rehabilitative environments and reintegration. It also requested the UNODC Executive Director to report to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its thirty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution.

Next, the Assembly adopted without a vote draft resolution III, “Integrating sport into youth crime prevention and criminal justice strategies”, by which it requested UNODC to compile best practices in relation to sports-based crime prevention programmes, as well as to support policymakers and practitioners, including on research, monitoring and evaluation. It also requested UNODC to strengthen its cooperation with United Nations entities that have sports-based programmes and interventions, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with a focus on youth and community development aimed at addressing the risk factors of youth violence, crime and illicit drug-related activities, and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

The Assembly next turned to draft resolution IV, “Strengthening criminal justice systems during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID–19) pandemic”, adopting it without a vote.

By its terms, the Assembly stressed the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to strengthening criminal justice systems, including the involvement of relevant stakeholders and public-private partnerships, and enhancing domestic inter-agency cooperation, and capacity-building for criminal justice officials and practitioners. It recommended that Member States promote the application of the United

Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), in particular towards improving detention conditions for both pre-trial and post-trial detainees and the capacities of prison and correctional institution staff. The Assembly requested UNODC to conduct further studies on the impact of COVID-19 on criminal justice systems and to provide recommendations on advancing reforms, with an emphasis on future preparedness, in particular by prison systems, to tackle challenges arising from pandemics and widespread health-related issues.

Next, the Assembly adopted without a vote draft resolution V, “Preventing and combating crimes that affect the environment”, urging Member States to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife — including flora and fauna as protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora — as well as in timber and timber products, in hazardous wastes and other wastes and in precious metals, stones and other minerals. It urged States to adopt measures to recover and return, in appropriate cases, the proceeds of such crimes, and affirm that the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption form an important part of the legal framework in that regard.

By other terms, the Assembly requested UNODC, in close consultation with intergovernmental organizations, to strengthen the collection of reliable data to enhance knowledge on trends in crimes affecting the environment and to periodically report to Member States thereon. It strongly encouraged Member States to increase the exchange of information among national authorities, as well as with other Member States and relevant international and regional organizations, urging them to investigate and prosecute the laundering of proceeds of crimes that affect the environment by using financial investigation techniques.

Next, the Assembly adopted without a vote draft resolution VI, “Improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons”, by which it decided to convene a high-level meeting on the progress achieved in implementing the 2010 Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, at its eightieth session no later than December 2025. It requested the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, in close cooperation with Member States, to arrange it. Expressing solidarity with and compassion for trafficking victims and survivors, the Assembly called for the full respect of their human rights and provision of victim-centred care.

Next, the Assembly adopted without a vote draft resolution VII, “Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity”.

By the text, the Assembly requested UNODC to continue to provide technical assistance to Member States, upon request, including in the field of international cooperation in criminal matters, to strengthen the rule of law, while taking into account work undertaken by other United Nations entities. It encouraged Member States to promote the integrity, honesty and responsibility of criminal justice practitioners through specialized and appropriate training and the application of codes or standards of conduct.

By other terms, the Assembly called on Member States to strengthen cooperation at the international, regional, subregional and bilateral levels to counter the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, encouraging them to strengthen their efforts to combat cybercrime and criminal misuse of information and communications technologies, and to enhance cooperation involving electronic evidence. Among other provisions, the Assembly invited Member States to ratify or accede to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols and the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol.

The General Assembly then took note of the report “Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes”.

The Assembly next took up the report on “International drug control”, which contained one draft resolution.

The Assembly then adopted draft resolution I, “International cooperation to address and counter the world drug problem”, requesting UNODC to continue to support Member States in mainstreaming a gender perspective into their policies and programmes related to the world drug problem, while inviting UN-Women and other United Nations entities to cooperate with UNODC. It also requested UNODC to strengthen Member States’ capacity to develop their reporting mechanisms by identifying gaps in the current drug statistics and by exploring possibilities to enhance existing national data-collection and analysis tools. By other terms, the Assembly requested all Member States to provide the fullest possible financial and political support to UNODC by widening its donor base and increasing voluntary contributions. In addition, it invited Member States to share best practices consistent with the three international drug control conventions to assess recent developments and challenges.

The Assembly next took up the report on “Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly”, containing one draft resolution titled “Draft programme of work of the Third Committee for the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly”, which it adopted without a vote.

The Assembly then took note of “Programme Planning — Report of the Third Committee”.

 **For information media. Not an official record.**