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Official Records

President: Mr. Kutesa (Uganda)

Mr. Mendonça e Moura (Portugal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 3 (continued)

Credentials of representatives to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly

(b) Report of the Credentials Committee (A/69/617)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 11 of its report. The draft resolution reads as follows:

“The General Assembly,

“Having considered the report of the Credentials Committee and the recommendation contained therein,

“Approves the report of the Credentials Committee.”

I now give the floor to the Chair of the Credentials Committee to introduce the report of the Committee and the draft resolution contained therein.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh), Chair of the Credentials Committee: I have the honour to introduce the report of the Credentials Committee concerning the credentials of the representatives of Member States to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, contained in document A/69/617.

Having considered the credentials of the representatives at its meeting of 25 November 2014, the Committee was pleased to adopt without a vote a draft resolution accepting their credentials. I would like to note that since the meeting of the Credentials Committee, the following Member States have submitted formal credentials in the form required by rule 27 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly: Algeria, India, Nigeria, Tunisia and Turkey.

I am now pleased to commend for the Assembly's consideration the Committee's recommendation, contained in paragraph 11 of its report, that the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution approving the report of the Credentials Committee. Finally, I wish to record my sincere appreciation to the members of the Committee and to the Secretariat for greatly facilitating our work.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled “Credentials of representatives to the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly”, recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 11 of its report. The Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 69/138).

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

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Mr. Dibaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation joined the consensus adoption of resolution 69/138. However, I would like to express my delegation's reservation on the parts of the report contained in A/69/617 that may be construed as recognition of the Israeli regime.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 3?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 14

Culture of peace

(a) Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/413)

(b) Draft resolutions (A/69/L.34 and A/69/L.41)

The Acting President: I would like to draw the attention of members to a letter dated 12 September 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, transmitting the seventh annual report of the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, circulated in document A/69/382.

I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.34.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace" (A/69/L.34). Bangladesh takes pride in having introduced the draft resolution on this item to the Assembly since 2001. We are pleased that the text has been receiving the overwhelming support of Member States and that it has been adopted every year by consensus.

The culture of peace is very close to all of our hearts. The culture of peace is an aspiration of all humankind, and it is also the essence of the Charter of the United Nations. Promoting and inculcating a mindset of a culture of peace is at the core of the creative management of differences and divisions. The world today faces too many problems of divisiveness and narrow-mindedness that disrupt and derail our shared objective of sustainable peace, stability and progress. Inequalities, discrimination, misunderstanding, intolerance and hatred around the globe are generating new dimensions of conflict. There is undoubtedly an urgent need to build and promote a culture of peace

across the world and to create a mindset of tolerance, respect and love for others and of respect for diversity, irrespective of caste, creed, colour, race, ethnicity or and religion.

If the world order is to move away from its present pockets of chaotic, uncertain and violent condition, building a culture of peace is the answer. Although we witnessed the completion of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, we need to maintain and strengthen our resolve now even more than we did in years gone by. We have impressive frameworks on paper, but translating them into action is still a challenging task. Therefore, we still need everyone's strong support and commitment.

Against that backdrop, my delegation has submitted this annual draft resolution. We thank Member States and their delegations for their active participation in the negotiation process. We thank them for their valuable inputs and cooperation, which have enriched the draft resolution. This year, the draft resolution has been strengthened by incorporating some important references and elements in promoting a culture of peace.

First, for example, it welcomes the successful holding of the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, convened by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session on 9 September, as envisaged in resolution 68/125. It refers particularly to high-level and wide-ranging partnership and inclusive collaboration among Member States, international organizations and civil societies. The draft resolution also welcomes with appreciation the observance of the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace by the Forum.

Secondly, the draft resolution recognizes the role of women and young people in advancing the culture of peace and, in particular, the importance of greater involvement of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in activities promoting a culture of peace, including in post-conflict situations.

Thirdly, the draft resolution also notes the initiatives of civil society, in collaboration with Governments, to strengthen civilian capacities to enhance the physical safety of vulnerable populations under threat of violence and to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Fourthly, the draft resolution notes the importance of due consideration to a culture of peace in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

Fifthly, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth session a report, within existing resources, on actions taken by Member States and by all concerned entities of the United Nations to implement the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

The High-level Forum on a Culture of Peace, organized by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session on 9 September, provided us with a unique opportunity to bring together Member States and stakeholders, and to reinvigorate our common endeavour to promote a culture of peace. The Forum was particularly important as it observed the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, and for its special focus on the role of women and young people, as well as the relevance of global citizenship in advancing the culture of peace.

The enthusiasm exhibited during the high-level event has inspired Member States to continue convening the forum. Holding such events every year will not necessarily incur additional costs to the United Nations budget, but it will convey a powerful message to the world, especially to young people, that the United Nations is truly committed to nurturing a culture of peace in order to help inculcate a mindset of respect and love for fellow human beings, free from a mindset of hatred, intolerance, misunderstanding, war and violence. We look forward to the convening of the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, and hope that it will make a meaningful contribution to furthering a culture of peace for a pro-people, pro-planet, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable world for all.

Each year, the draft resolution receives the support of a large number of Member States. I am pleased to mention that this year about 100 countries are sponsoring this important draft resolution. A significant development this year is the fact that the draft has received wide-ranging and cross-regional sponsorship. We express our sincere thanks and commendations to all the sponsors for their support and commitment, particularly those countries that are sponsoring the draft text for the first time.

It is my belief and hope that one day, not only every delegation will come forward to sponsor the draft resolution, but, more importantly, that every nation, every society, every family and every household will practice the spirit and the mindset of a culture of peace for our cherished goal of sustainable peace, stability and prosperity across nations. With that aspiration, I hope that, as in past years, we will be able to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.41.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): It is my great honour to join the Permanent Representative of the Philippines, Mr. Libran Cabactulan, in introducing the draft resolution entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace” (A/69/L.41).

Following last-minute consultations with the negotiating Member States, the facilitators have agreed to introduce the following revisions to the text of the draft resolution.

A new preambular paragraph will be inserted after the fifth preambular paragraph, which shall read “Recalling also its resolution 68/127 on a world against violence and violent extremism”.

In the first line of the current sixteenth preambular paragraph, the words “taking note of” are to be deleted and replaced with the word “welcoming”.

In the last line of paragraph 11, the words “calls upon Member States to create conditions for voices of moderation to be heard” are to be deleted and replaced with the words “encourages efforts, as appropriate, to enable voices of moderation to be heard”.

I thank all Member States that took active part in the negotiations on the draft resolution this year and enriched its content with their constructive suggestions. I also thank the Secretary-General for submitting his comprehensive report on the agenda item (A/69/413), which outlines the progress achieved in the implementation of resolution 68/126, adopted by consensus last year.

We appreciate the leading role of UNESCO and the valuable contribution of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue at the national, regional and international levels. We particularly welcome

the adoption by the Executive Board of UNESCO of the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures. The Plan offers a strong opportunity to take practical steps for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue through education, culture and the media, with an emphasis on the involvement of young men and women in the dialogue process. We hope that Member States and the relevant United Nations agencies will undertake appropriate programmes and activities in support of the Action Plan.

The world today is afflicted with destructive conflicts, old and new, which are fuelled by lingering suspicions and mistrust across religious and civilizational fault-lines. Those conflicts not only cause immense human suffering and economic losses, but also obstruct friendly interaction and socioeconomic cooperation among the various regions and nations of the world. We are also witnessing a growing trend towards xenophobia and religious intolerance and the emergence of new extremist ideologies in different parts of the world.

The impending clash of civilizations in a globalized world is both avoidable and reversible. Much of it can be traced to the growing gap in understanding, trust and tolerance among the various religions and civilizations of the world. Extremist and terrorist groups exploit the gap to propagate their own toxic agenda. It is therefore imperative for all of us to strengthen the mechanisms and actions for the promotion of dialogue and understanding among all religions and civilizations with a view to restoring harmony and strengthening cooperation for peace and development.

Despite their differences, religions and cultures have a lot in common that can actually unite us. We need to build on those shared values. Cultural diversity can be converted into a positive force for promoting cooperation, socioeconomic development and international harmony. If that is to happen, we will have to join hands to eliminate prejudices, biases and stereotypes and to engage in a genuine and constructive dialogue at all levels across cultural and religious divides. The dialogue should be pursued in a structured, multilayered and all-inclusive format. It should include religious and community leaders, civil society and academic institutions.

The ultimate objective of dialogue should be to prevent conflict and promote peace and harmony through better understanding, moderation and a global

culture of peace. It is our belief that, with enhanced dialogue and better understanding, it is possible to achieve the objective of a diverse, yet harmonious and peaceful world, standing firmly on the pillars of peaceful coexistence and unity in diversity. We hope that the Assembly will, once again, lend its unanimous support to the draft resolution.

Mr. Cabactulan (Philippines): The Philippines joins our co-facilitator, Pakistan, in introducing the draft resolution on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, contained in document A/69/L.41, under agenda item 14, "Culture of peace", with revisions, including a new fifth preambular paragraph and some changes in paragraph 11, as orally presented by the Ambassador of Pakistan, following last-minute consultations with the negotiating Member States.

This year, we are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the resolution. It is fitting that we do so with the adoption by UNESCO in March of the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures. Hence, the draft resolution encourages Member States and the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to carry out activities in support of the Action Plan.

Aside from continuing its recognition of the valuable role of the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs as the focal point within the Secretariat on the issue, the draft resolution strengthens its support for the work and activities of UNESCO, the lead agency for the implementation of the draft resolution and of the Action Plan. It especially welcomes the UNESCO Peace and Dialogue e-Portal as a means of promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue through information technology, a tool that is particularly relevant in reaching out to young people.

The draft resolution also continues to welcome the deepening engagement of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and welcomes the Bali Declaration adopted at the Sixth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, with the theme "Unity in Diversity: Celebrating Diversity for Common and Shared Values", which was held in Bali, Indonesia, from 28 to 30 August.

I cannot overemphasize the value of our ongoing efforts in promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and of such dialogue as the foundation for a

just and lasting peace. As we approach the banner year of 2015, the draft resolution recognizes the importance of giving due consideration to culture in the ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. Without peace, there can be no sustainable development.

We have seen this in the Philippines, on the island of Mindanao, where peace negotiations to settle years of conflict succeeded only when all of the stakeholders realized that peace must go hand in hand with development and that peace would come only when we had interreligious and intercultural dialogue. That is at the heart of the successful conclusion of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro that the Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front signed in March. It was pushed forward by, among others, a series of Bishops-Ulama conferences, some of which were held in Pakistan and which we hope can be used by other States as a model for interfaith dialogue.

The pursuit of universal peace is not easy given the challenges and complexities of the modern world and, in fact recent complications. It is also not a short-term issue or goal. We therefore believe that the affirmation of the need for mutual understanding of our diversity in religions as well as cultures and the dialogue of civilizations on an annual basis is essential to the culture of peace.

We also believe that interreligious and intercultural dialogue is an issue that cannot be addressed in isolation or stand by itself. The initiatives and other resolutions under the agenda item — including the draft resolution on the culture of peace — complement and build on each other, as they address different dimensions of the issue. Allow us at this point to thank the Member States that have traditionally sponsored and supported the draft resolution and to welcome and thank those Member States that are sponsoring it for the first time.

Finally, we wish to thank all delegations that actively contributed to the discussions and exercised honesty, flexibility, constructiveness and cooperation. Together with Pakistan, the Philippine delegation and the other sponsors commend the draft resolution for consensus adoption by the Assembly.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): On behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), it is an honour for me to address the General Assembly on agenda item 14, “Culture of peace”. CARICOM takes this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for the report (A/69/413)

prepared and submitted to guide our consideration of the agenda item. CARICOM also wishes to thank UNESCO and the various United Nations entities that are committed to promoting the values of the culture of peace.

We live in an era of increasing globalization and deepening interdependence. As CARICOM itself is the essence of cultural diversity, we recognize the importance of promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue. CARICOM believes that the peaceful resolution of conflicts and differences is crucial to social and economic development.

Disparities among and within countries remain a global concern. Poverty and social and income inequality have persisted, causing growing resentment and intolerance. CARICOM believes that the post-2015 development agenda will need to address the increasing inequalities among countries and ensure that globalization benefits all countries and not just a selected few. Consistent with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations must be a force for equality and fairness in the context of an inequitable system of globalization. The United Nations must work to ensure that rules apply evenly, effectively and consistently among all actors in our global family.

The report of the Secretary-General notes that in increasingly diverse and interconnected societies, cultural and religious differences are at the forefront. People need to be equipped with the capacities necessary to thwart hate speech, challenge stereotypes and promote peaceful coexistence in diversity. People need to be educated on the basic principles of peace, tolerance, cooperation, peaceful dialogue and mutual respect for all. CARICOM believes that nowhere is it more important to promote these values than among our young people. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has declared that through education, we teach children not to hate. Through education, we raise leaders who act with wisdom and compassion. Through education, we establish a true, lasting culture of peace.

CARICOM strongly believes that education, which causes a fundamental shift in how we view reality, is a powerful weapon against oppression. Education empowers. Malala Yousafzai, the 17-year-old education activist from Pakistan, who was recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, is a shining example of that. In her Nobel Peace Prize lecture, Malala said:

“Why is it that countries which we call strong are so powerful in creating wars but are so weak in bringing peace? Why is it that giving guns is so easy but giving books is so hard? Why is it, why is it that making tanks is so easy, but building schools is so hard?”

“We are living in the modern age and we believe that nothing is impossible. We have reached the moon 45 years ago and maybe will soon land on Mars. Then, in this twenty-first century, we must be able to give every child quality education.

“We must work, not wait. Not just the politicians and the world leaders, we all need to contribute. Me. You. We. It is our duty.”

It is CARICOM’s hope that through peace education, we can create a mindset of tolerance and cooperation and create an enduring culture of peace.

Mr. Ismail (Brunei Darussalam): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report and commend the Philippines, Pakistan and Bangladesh for their efforts in facilitating resolutions A/69/L.41 on interreligious and interfaith dialogue and A/69/L.34 on a culture of peace.

We would like to take the opportunity to extend our support to the Government and people of Australia on the hostage situation in Sydney that took place yesterday. We reject extremism and radicalism, stand ready and united with the international community, and strongly condemn violent terrorist acts. At the same time, our heartfelt sympathy and deepest condolences also go to our fellow ASEAN colleague Indonesia, which has been affected by a landslide in Central Java on Friday, 12 December, which resulted in the deaths of a number of people.

ASEAN strongly upholds the culture of peace that has been instilled in its States members since the establishment of our Association. As stated in paragraph 2 of the Bangkok Declaration of 1967, among the aims and objectives of the formation of ASEAN is

“To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter”.

ASEAN believes that a culture of peace must be inculcated starting from a young age. In that regard, we have put in place a regional programme called ASEAN Young Professionals Volunteer Corps, which provides assistance to projects ranging from rural development, poverty eradication, education, agriculture and health to environmental matters. The programme aims to promote the values of equality and mutual respect and strengthen mutual understanding through promoting dialogue and interaction among young people.

ASEAN is in the midst of working towards building an ASEAN Community by 2015 that is characterized by people of varied background, ethnicity, language, religion and culture living together in harmony and building towards a common future of peace and prosperity. As paragraph 6 of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint states, the ASEAN Community will be characterized by

“a culture of regional resilience, adherence to agreed principles, spirit of cooperation, collective responsibility, to promote human and social development, respect for fundamental freedoms, gender equality, the promotion and protection of human rights and the promotion of social justice”.

That is affirmed in the ASEAN Vision 2020, which sees ASEAN as

“a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies”.

We see that the real divide in the world today is no longer between East and West, or between the developed and developing economies, or between the rich and poor, and certainly not between different faiths. Instead, it is the disparity between the moderates and extremists that has caused the various problems and challenges affecting us today.

We understand that peace cannot be attained through ASEAN’s efforts alone and that cooperation among everyone is very necessary. ASEAN, therefore,

will continue to engage in dialogue with our external partners through ASEAN-led mechanisms, including through preventive diplomacy and confidence-building measures under the ASEAN Regional Forum; the peaceful settlement of disputes through initiatives such as the Global Movement of Moderates, which upholds the value of moderation; and other activities under the non-traditional areas of security, defence and disaster management.

ASEAN States members at various national levels have also been contributing to the work of other regional and international organizations. We welcome and support, inter alia, the interfaith dialogue initiative under the Asia-Europe Meeting, and the Declaration of the Asia-Europe Meeting High-level Conference on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue, under the theme “Harmony of Civilizations: necessary condition of sustainable development”, held in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, in July. We also continue to support the Interfaith Dialogue e-Portal established by the Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development, held in Manila in 2010. In particular, we also welcome the practical initiatives to employ information and communications technology to reach out to the young people and to all members of civil society.

ASEAN further underscores the importance of giving due consideration to a culture of peace to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda, since when there is no peace, there will be no development. Moreover, last month in Myanmar our leaders signed the Nay Pyi Taw Declaration on the ASEAN Community’s Post-2015 Vision, which serves as the basis for a comprehensive road map for ASEAN, beyond 2015.

We therefore fully support the efforts of the United Nations in promoting a culture of peace, particularly through the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures 2013-2022, formulated by UNESCO in consultation with Member States and the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and which emphasizes the involvement of youth and women in cultivating mutual understanding and tolerance; the UNESCO Peace and Dialogue e-Portal in its outreach; and the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilization in promoting mutual understanding among different civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs.

ASEAN Member States are also committed to the promotion of a culture of peace and have been actively participating in such forums as the annual meeting of the Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, which held its sixth Forum in Bali, Indonesia, in August.

To conclude, ASEAN takes this opportunity to reiterate our commitment to upholding a culture of peace, as enshrined in our founding principles and Charter, and will continue to play an active role in pursuing that course. We also stand ready to work alongside all regional and international partners and complement the work of the United Nations towards this end.

Ms. Lusananon (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statement delivered by the permanent representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Thailand wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/69/413). We commend the commitment and active role of United Nations entities, in particular UNESCO, in promoting a culture of peace and for their valuable contributions.

We are living in the world of great diversity and increasingly interconnected societies. It is therefore highly essential for all of us to appreciate and cherish this beauty of diversity in order to live in peace and harmony. However, the world we are living in is crying for peace. Intolerance, discrimination, exclusion, inequality and hatred, to name just a few problems, are significant threats to peace and harmony. No single country can overcome such threats alone. The international community must work together to promote a sustainable culture of peace at the national, regional and global levels.

Thailand’s domestic and foreign policy prioritizes the strengthening of the value of moderation in order to promote better understanding and mutual respect among different cultures, religions, faiths and beliefs. Everyone in the society must be equipped with the skills to recognize and stop hate speech, stereotypes and discrimination. We strongly believe that the freedom of expression, human rights and the rule of law are fertile ground in which to cultivate peace and harmony in multicultural societies.

Thailand honours our international commitments with regard to dialogue for preventive diplomacy

within various frameworks, including ASEAN, the Asia-Europe Meeting, the Asia-Middle East Dialogue and the Asia Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue. The fifth ASEAN “Bridges — Dialogues Towards a Culture of Peace” event was held in Thailand in September 2014. That event was part of the Bridges series, hosted by the International Peace Foundation, involving several major public events that will run continuously in Thailand until March 2015. The event covers a wide range of issues in politics, economics, science, culture and media, with the goal of bridging differences and building a culture of peace and development in a globalized world.

We participate actively in various international dialogue and cooperation frameworks as well as provide full cooperation and support, whenever and wherever needed, to promote global harmony to the best of our ability. In this regard, Thailand commends the Government of Indonesia for hosting the sixth United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Global Forum under the theme “unity in diversity”. Thailand, as an original member of the Group of Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, has been proactively supportive of promoting the culture of peace and interreligious, interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

Promoting a sustainable culture of peace requires a holistic approach. Let me share with the Assembly some of our views in this regard. First, it is imperative to engage Member States, the relevant United Nations agencies and all relevant stakeholders. Thailand supports the constructive roles of various actors, be they public or private sector, civil society, media, academia, local leaders, religious figures, women and youth. We underscore in particular the role of women as agents for peace and conflict resolution. The role of media as a carrier of peace in advocating the culture of peace is also indispensable.

Secondly, Thailand recognizes the need to spread the message of peace, tolerance and promoting mutual respect of differences. We are appalled by the fact that religions that carry the message of peace-making and peacekeeping have been misinterpreted and distorted and become the main driving force for violence and terrorism. We therefore urgently need to promote a true understanding of the essence of religions, faiths and beliefs and to counter ideologies that underpin violence. The constructive roles of religious leaders, academia and media can greatly contribute to better understanding and bridging differences.

Thirdly, the promotion of a culture of peace can be carried out through capacity-building and education. Expert historians met in Bangkok in September 2014 to discuss ways to raise awareness about the shared histories of South-East Asia, to improve the quality of history curricula in order to encourage mutual understanding and respect among people in the region and strengthen relations among neighbours. In addition, the first UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education was also held in Bangkok in December 2013.

Fourthly, we need to place an increased emphasis on Youth. Promoting the notion of peace as part of the youth culture will undoubtedly contribute to the realization of our goals. To this end, Thailand has been very active in promoting the culture of peace among young people not only through the early stages of the education but also through various activities organized by governmental agencies, academics, non-governmental organizations as well as local communities. We place high hopes in harnessing a vibrant, forward-thinking new generation of minds, for whom prejudice and the incitement of hatred has no place within their culture.

Last but not least, we are witnessing the rapid spread of hate speech and incitement across the globe through the Internet. We need to formulate more effective policies and to explore new tools and mechanisms to prevent and combat such malicious acts.

In conclusion, Thailand supports and co-sponsors all resolutions under this agenda item to demonstrate our resolve in this respect. In conclusion, let me reiterate Thailand’s commitment to working closely with the international community in fostering culture of peace and intercultural understanding. Let us counter violence with non-violence. Let us build peace with peace.

Mr. Alali (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): It a pleasure for me to address the General Assembly on this very important item. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/69/413). I would also like to thank Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al Nasser, High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, for his report and for his efforts and contributions to strengthening the culture peace.

We read with great interest the report of the Director-General of UNESCO concerning the follow-up to and implementation of the resolution and programme of action on the culture of peace. We welcome UNESCO’s activities promoting a culture of peace and non-violence in all areas of its work.

It goes without saying that peace is not come by easily. It cannot be strengthened without the proper climate and conditions to protect it. The culture of peace is funded on a great number of principles, values and human behaviours, based on the rejection of the use of force and closely linked to development and human rights. The State of Qatar is aware that to establish and strengthen peace, a great number of practical factors are necessary in several areas. Our commitment in these factors is based on several pillars, which are the basis of our foreign policy. We therefore devote significant effort towards settling conflicts peacefully in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations through mediation aimed at resolving tensions that threaten international peace and security.

The United Nations also influences governmental policy to strengthen socioeconomic and human development on the basis of human rights for all. We have sought to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and good governance, as well as to promote gender equality and combat terrorism, crime and corruption. We have given particular importance to strengthening the participations of all segments of society in national processes, in particular to the empowerment of youth because young people represent the generation that bears greatest responsibility for building a future of peace and prosperity. On 25 and 26 March, we held a conference on young people and their role in strengthening the values of dialogue, with more than 350 participants representing many cultural and religious affiliations. We held the Tenth Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue from 23 to 25 April 2013, on the theme of best practices in interfaith dialogue, and launched an annual global award for interfaith dialogue.

The State of Qatar was one of the first countries to contribute to the support and development of the Alliance of Civilizations. We have played a major role in fighting polarization and extremism, while strengthening tolerance and cultural diversity. From 11 to 13 December 2011 we also hosted the Alliance's Fourth Global Forum.

Education is one of the principal ways to reach a generation that understands the values of peace and benefits from them. We have sought to promote education as a national priority by including the culture of peace in our school curriculums, and we have positive signs of progress in that educational area. At the international level, we have worked to adopt a number of initiatives aimed at helping children to grapple with

the negative effects of conflict, such as our Education Above All and Educate a Child initiatives, launched by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, designed to enable millions of children in countries racked by war and conflict to have access to high-quality primary education.

Finally, we would like to say that we agree with the Secretary-General that peace is one of the strategic dimensions of the post-2015 development agenda, and with the recommendation of the Director-General of UNESCO to the effect that peace should not be defined merely as the absence of conflict, but that it implies respect for and a guarantee of three of people's legitimate rights — dignity, diversity and dialogue between cultures.

Mr. Haniff (Malaysia): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, as contained in document A/69/413.

Malaysia would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

My delegation would like to reiterate the importance of complying with the basic principles of the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, adopted by the General Assembly in 1999 (resolution 53/243). In that regard, the international community should strengthen its ongoing efforts to promote a culture of peace and effectively implement the Programme of Action.

We would like to join other Member States in commending the work and initiatives of UNESCO, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and other United Nations entities, including regional initiatives such as the Asia-Pacific Interfaith Dialogue and the ASEAN Interfaith Dialogue. I would like to express our appreciation to the Director-General of UNESCO on its successful launch of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022). We are encouraged by the new Action Plan and believe that it provides various opportunities for ensuring a renewed focus on intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace.

We take note of the outcome of the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace held at the United Nations on 9 September. We would also like to acknowledge the roles and contributions of women and young people, as

well as non-governmental organizations, to a culture of peace, and of global citizenship as a pathway to that culture of peace. Malaysia will continue its active participation and support in promoting a culture of peace, interreligious and intercultural dialogue and understanding and cooperation for peace.

I would like to recall the Prime Minister of Malaysia's proposal to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session on the establishment of the Global Movement of Moderates, calling on people of every religious belief and faith, including all their interreligious and intercultural aspects, to work together to tackle extremism (see A/65/PV.19, p. 20). Malaysia strongly believes that aspects related to moderation, and the promotion of a culture of peace, will eventually curb extremism and radicalism. We are hopeful that our noble efforts will eventually counter and drown out the voices of extremists and radicals. For that to happen, we encourage all Member States to work together to institute a culture of peace and moderation among peoples domestically as well as internationally.

My delegation acknowledges the importance of maintaining peace and harmony in order to avoid instability and mistrust, which hamper countries' development efforts. I would like to share briefly some of Malaysia's experiences in promoting a culture of peace. Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious country. In order to preserve peace and harmony among its various racial and ethnic groups, it has introduced the concept of One Malaysia, which puts the emphasis on balance and comprehensive development and the promotion of culture and morality, based on positive aspirational values.

We believe that our ongoing efforts to promote a culture of peace, dialogue and exchanges of ideas are some of the best ways to instil understanding and acceptance between different groups, faiths and religions. We should also share ideas and knowledge and discover common ground that may be able to bring disparate groups closer together. It is our strong belief that promoting a culture of peace should be an inclusive process. Positive interaction among peoples of diverse cultures and values will therefore help to achieve the aim of preserving and promoting global peace and stability, which are essential prerequisites for promoting sustainable economic and social development.

In conclusion, Malaysia is pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolutions A/69/L.34, on the follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of

Peace, and A/69/L.41, on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace. We all want a world free from violence and war, and to live in peace and harmony. In order to achieve that, we must work tirelessly to build a more secure and peaceful world for our children and future generations.

Mr. Rakhmetullin (Kazakhstan): My delegation supports both of today's draft resolutions under the agenda item "Culture of peace" (A/69/L.34 and A/69/L.41), since they give an impetus to many actions already undertaken to advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity within and among nations, so acutely needed in today's world, torn as it is by strife, conflicts, terrorism and religious intolerance. In order to be effective, the draft resolutions must be reinforced by the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, the Alliance of Civilizations — under the broad United Nations platform for dialogue among civilizations — and all other legal instruments and frameworks related to culture and peace.

The implementation of the draft resolutions calls for well-coordinated action on the part of the United Nations system, led by UNESCO, its Member States, regional organizations and all other stakeholders, in order to reduce poverty — which breeds conflict — and foster social cohesion and inclusion, pluralistic and democratic participation, and sustainable development for all segments of society, including women, young people and children. Focus must also be on indigenous peoples, refugees, displaced persons and migrants.

Today we have the opportunity to minimize extremism, bias and prejudice through education and the promotion of values, the appropriate use of new technologies and the dissemination and free flow of information. We must reach out to establish durable international peace and security through general and complete disarmament and effective arms control of all weapons of mass destruction, including small arms. Confidence-building measures and efforts on conflict prevention and negotiating peaceful settlements are also crucial. Problems arising from post-conflict situations must be addressed through measures such as the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants into society, weapons-collection programmes, the exchange of information and truth and reconciliation commissions.

Progress at the global level can be achieved through the individual efforts of Member States, and

Kazakhstan's efforts have been noteworthy in many dimensions. As a nation with about 130 ethnic groups and almost 20 different religious denominations, Kazakhstan has established a unique mechanism of inter-ethnic and interfaith dialogue — the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, a body that plays an important role in statehood development and decision-making, including through direct participation in the legislative processes of my country's Parliament.

To foster peace and stability through such a dialogue between diverse faiths and cultures, in 2003 the President of Kazakhstan launched the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which is held triennially. As the outcome of the fourth Congress, in May 2012, a council of religious leaders was created to focus on cooperation with other forums and international organizations, such as the United Nations. In 2015, the fifth meeting of the Congress will focus on closer dialogue among religious and political leaders. We look forward to enhanced cooperation between the Congress and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations to promote further peace and stability through intercultural and interfaith dialogue.

Kazakhstan, as the first Eurasian Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2010 and the Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in 2011-2012, continued to promote interfaith dialogue on the regional and global stages. My country has also enacted new legislation and instituted new governmental agencies and mechanisms. Kazakhstan is highly committed to providing moral and spiritual education to children and young people to overcome the spiritual vacuum of human values and to strengthen the moral fabric of its society. That has protected people from the dangers of their moral self-destruction and degradation.

Kazakhstan also initiated the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and, subsequently, the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures 2013-2022, adopted during the thirty-sixth session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 2011. That has provided the space for a decade of events and activities to promote progress on issues from tolerance to an actual culture of peace.

Kazakhstan pledges to join the multilateral effort to foster global harmony and cooperation and strengthen everyday peace through focusing on human capacities and empowerment of peoples in the post-2015 development phase.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is honoured to participate in today's debate on the culture of peace. We take this opportunity to thank Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO; Mr. Jorge Sampaio, former High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations; and Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, United Nations High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations, for their efforts to disseminate a culture of peace, dialogue and respect for differences. We welcome all efforts to integrate those values, with a particular focus on education and youth participation. We have also taken note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/69/413) on the main activities of United Nations organizations over the past year to promote the dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions.

The world today is facing major problems due to divisions distracting us from our common goals of global peace and security. Despite the many efforts to strengthen these shared objectives, it is regrettable to note the increasing power of ongoing intolerance, discrimination, xenophobia, Islamophobia and inter-State, ethnic and religious tensions, while peace remains elusive. The world still has a way to go in ensuring that States and their people can learn to coexist in diversity and to make it a source of spiritual, cultural and civilizational wealth. It is also essential that the United Nations become the catalyst in creating new forms of cooperation, solidarity and involvement to achieve the well-being and progress of humankind and peace and dignity for all people, wherever they may be.

We are all facing a historic turning point globally, politically and economically. It is essential to preserve spaces for dialogue — such as the Alliance of Civilizations — to counteract the pull of radicalism, terrorism, dissent, separatism and obscurantist doctrines. By remaining within the Alliance and focused on our basic objectives of rapprochement among cultures, strengthening mutual understanding and combating the hostage-taking of peoples and religious beliefs by minorities with extremist ideologies, we can achieve our universal targets.

In these troubled times, when some are determined to pit ideologies and groups against one another, it is the responsibility of the Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations to continue to work with lucidity, wisdom and determination and, more than ever, functionally. Morocco understood early on the need for enhanced

efforts to prevent terrorism and religious extremism by adopting a unique preventive strategy. That de-radicalization strategy is based on the triptych of religious security, preventive security and human development.

In that framework, Morocco offers technical training in the fight against terrorism. The programme was inaugurated with Mali through the training, in Morocco, of 500 Malian imams. Other countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, the Niger, Tunisia and Guinea, have requested the assistance of the Kingdom of Morocco to allow their imams to benefit from the training. The Ministry of Endowments, which oversees the programme, is planning to build a training institute in Fez, in response to the growing demand in that domain. Moreover, based on its experience, traditional values and political resolve, Morocco has always striven to maintain a space for peace and prosperity in the Maghreb, Africa, the Euro-Mediterranean region and the Middle East.

Morocco continues to work constructively in establishing good-neighbourly and trusting relations within all cultural spaces. In collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Rabat, Morocco will undertake several actions aimed at strengthening the protection of cultural diversity and promoting pluralism and dialogue among cultures and religions. Likewise, Morocco has often called for the promotion of culture through dialogue, as it has always been a welcoming land of tolerance and conviviality that is open to other civilizations, cultures and religions. As His Majesty King Mohammed VI said, in a speech at the 2001 conference of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

“From time immemorial, Morocco has been and remains a crossroads of tolerance and cohabitation, a haven for understanding and coexistence, and a point of departure in establishing communication bridges between civilizations and cultures and among various societies, regardless of their diverse religions, beliefs and ethnic origins.”

In that spirit we hope that the rapprochement of cultures will contribute substantially to the emergence of a true culture of tolerance, dialogue and understanding among all Member States and create fertile ground for an opening towards others and acceptance of their specific characteristics.

Finally, the Kingdom of Morocco is pleased to sponsor draft resolutions A/69/L.34 and A/69/L.41, entitled “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace” and “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”, respectively. We urge their adoption by consensus.

Mr. Sumi (Japan): Japan would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for his report on the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/69/413). We also wish to express our thanks to the representative of Bangladesh for introducing the draft resolution on the follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/69/L.34), and to the representatives of Pakistan and the Philippines for introducing the draft resolution on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/69/L.41). Japan would further like to thank the delegations that joined in the negotiations on these draft resolutions for their flexibility and valuable contributions to the texts.

Japan believes that women are agents of peace and can significantly contribute to conflict prevention and resolution. In line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, Japan has been actively promoting the role of women in these domains. Furthermore, we share the view of many other delegations that peace lies in the hands of future generations. Therefore, we attach great importance to cultivating a culture of peace among young people through education on relevant topics. As Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Shinzo Abe stated before the General Assembly in September,

“Japan is a nation that has worked to eliminate the war culture from people’s hearts, and it will spare no effort in continuing to do so” (A/69/PV.9, p. 30).

In the same vein, Japan embraced the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, held in September, and its focus on the role of women and young people in advancing the culture of peace. In that regard, and with reference to the draft resolution on the follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, Japan would like to direct particular attention to the seventeenth preambular paragraph, which reads:

“Recognizing the role of women and young people in advancing the culture of peace and, in particular, the importance of greater involvement of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in activities promoting a culture of peace, including post-conflict situations.”

Japan firmly believes that the role and contributions of women and young people to the culture of peace are important not only because women and young people represent a significant part of the global population, but also because they are the key drivers of the sort of change of mindset, institutions and cultures that we seek.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report entitled “Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace” (A/69/413). For the first time here, we have seen UNESCO, the Alliance of Civilizations and all United Nations entities, through their activities, strive to strengthen the culture of peace and implement the plans and resolutions adopted. I would also like to acknowledge Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser for his implementation of the strategic plan for the period 2013-2018.

The Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations stipulates that, in order to fulfil the noble objectives of the Organization:

“We the peoples of the United Nations [are] determined ... to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security.”

Similarly, the Preamble of the UNESCO Constitution declares, “That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”.

In this regard, I would like to express our full support for all these initiatives. Tunisia has been home to numerous successive cultures and religions throughout its 3,000-year history. Today it stands as a bridge for mutual understanding, rapprochement and coexistence among nations, owing to its strategic position in relation to Africa, Europe and the Arab world. Tunisia’s position is also based on its conviction of the need to enlarge on these concepts in order to foster peace, tolerance and dialogue and to emphasize

the human aspects of strengthening social stability and economic development.

Based on these values, we invite all international entities and civil society organizations and the private sector to spread this culture of rapprochement, dialogue and cooperation among peoples, nations, cultures and religions in order to benefit from the available frameworks and mechanisms, especially those offered by the United Nations. Given the threats posed today by extremism, exclusionism, radicalization and terrorism to peace and security, this has never been more important for a world ripe with potential. We have always supported the essential role of UNESCO in spreading the culture of peace and rapprochement through its various programmes, and especially in the context of its programme on the culture of peace and non-violence, as well as the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022). These represent two important frameworks in which UNESCO is able to promote peace and dialogue.

Tunisia would also like to acknowledge the inclusion of culture in the post-2015 development agenda. Along these same lines, we support the new strategic plan for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations for the period 2013-2018, which reflects a new concept of expanding the activities of the Alliance to develop resources and implement its programmes. We also appreciate the fact that the Alliance is working to implement concrete projects in order to realize its objectives, based on regional and national strategies. We would also like to commend the cooperation partnership with the United Nations Development Programme in all of our country’s sectors, including youth programmes. In the same vein, I would like to commend the efforts of other United Nations entities and programmes to strengthen the culture of peace, particularly the Peacebuilding Commission, which plays a very important role in post-conflict situations.

In conclusion, I commend all efforts to spread the message of tolerance and dialogue in our world today, and to reiterate Tunisia’s determination to participate in them, in view of its historical role in promoting peace and security.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Peace is like the oxygen we breathe. Most of the time, when it is there, we do not realize how important it is. Sometimes we neglect it and do not tend it. When we do not have it, we realize how vital it is as

a catalyst in every area of human activity and all of our ventures, individual or collective, for economic, social and cultural progress.

Need we stress yet again, to give it its full importance, that our country's motto begins with the word "peace", followed by "work" and "fatherland" — constituting an entire vision and programme? Need we recall yet again that for many years our country has taken part in United Nations operations in several parts of the world in order to defend peace?

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the issue, contained in document A/69/413. Four years after the end of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010, I welcome the fact that a culture of peace is still one of our community's concerns. Cameroon shares the position of the Secretary-General that peace must be taken into due account in formulating the post-2015 development agenda. My country is aware of the importance of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace for the good of all humankind, particularly future generations.

Like UNESCO, we believe firmly that we must cultivate the defence of peace in people's minds. We are an active participant in the Programme of Action. That is why we subscribe to the Education Above All global initiative. In that connection, we have included civic education in the official school curriculum, starting with the early language section of primary education — which is, by the way, compulsory and free to all — through the final year of secondary school. The programme transmits values such as understanding of others, tolerance, knowledge of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and acceptance of differences as sources of enrichment. This helps to strengthen peace, social stability, respect for diversity and mutual respect, promoting an atmosphere conducive to peace and understanding. I should not omit to emphasize the importance of UNESCO Clubs, which are formed by students in secondary schools with the aim of further advocating the values promoted by the agency.

I would like to emphasize Cameroon's celebration every 21 September, along with the rest of the international community, of the International Day of Peace, and of the International Day of Non-Violence on 2 October. The two days are an opportunity for recalling the values dear to our Organization and without which humankind would be in peril. I am talking about our

shared fight for the common values of maintaining and building peace, preventing conflict, disarmament, sustainable economic and social development, promoting human dignity and rights, democracy, the rule of law, good governance, tolerance, gender equality, non-violence and the peaceful settlement of differences.

If peace is to be lasting, it must be inclusive. That is why it is important to promote peaceful coexistence among different cultures and religions. Ecumenical, interfaith and intercultural dialogue has made a valuable contribution to social cohesion, harmony and active dialogue in Cameroon, an Africa in miniature. It enables us to question prejudices and improve mutual understanding. In that regard, we should emphasize the important role of education and awareness-raising through the media and information and communication technologies.

In conclusion, peace is cultivated in people's minds as they go about their daily life. In order to achieve it, we need to increase our activities at every level, in order to make progress every day in promoting and enjoying peace. I call on everyone here to continue to work together to attain that goal. Our shared future depends on it. In the light of all of these considerations, Cameroon, as in previous years, has become a sponsor of today's draft resolutions (A/69/L.34 and A/69/L.41), which we would request the Assembly to support unanimously.

Mr. Agbangla (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I commend the holding of today's meeting, which gives us a happy opportunity to tackle a subject of great concern for which our shared Organization, whose mandate is to contribute to international peace and security, is the best possible venue and framework. The subject is also a major issue for our peoples' present and future and one that is always worth revisiting, emphasizing, deepening our consideration of and, above all, working on together.

My delegation welcomes the multifaceted efforts by the United Nations to define and adopt, on behalf of the international community, the principles and values on which peoples' coexistence for peace should be based. Many resolutions have been adopted by the General Assembly in this regard, and my country has always supported such resolutions by sponsoring them. I am pleased to note in particular resolutions 53/243 A, 53/243 B and, above all, 67/104, on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding

and cooperation for peace, adopted by the Assembly in December 2012, and the adoption of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures 2013-2022, which gives us the framework and the opportunity to work together to build a true culture of peace in the spirit of the Yamoussoukro declaration of 1989.

My delegation would like to commend the remarkable work done in the field by the major United Nations agencies and entities, despite the difficulties they encounter, aimed at operationalizing the ideals and standards conveyed by the aforementioned resolutions. I am thinking in particular of the vital role that UNESCO plays in this matter and that of the Alliance of Civilizations, which, since its establishment, has demonstrated its relevance and usefulness in the United Nations system.

We also support all the initiatives taken by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to promote interreligious dialogue and the culture of peace. Benin further duly appreciates the specific contribution of certain civil society structures, particularly the Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, established by His Majesty King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and based in Vienna, and the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation for Peace Research, headquartered in Yamoussoukro.

Allow me to place a particular emphasis on dialogue, including interreligious and intercultural dialogue, to which my country, Benin, has always attached particular importance, as we have ample experience in the matter. We humbly believe that that fact has enabled us to today send a message to other countries, especially in Africa. As the Assembly knows, religions' place and role in the public space, whether in Africa or anywhere around the world, are not simple. Our modern societies' relationship on the one hand with religions, whether they are indigenous or of the book, and on the other between such religion's adherents, is very often complex. Prejudice, resentment and misunderstandings constantly arise.

However, when we look closely, bridges and points of convergence do exist between religions and can be cultivated. We discover that fact by opening spaces for dialogue, allowing the various religious authorities and followers to talk in order to get to know each other better, with respect for their own identities, to discuss their views, to clear up misunderstandings, to facilitate mutual understanding and to recognize the need to live together in community. We can strengthen dialogue

only by educating young people on tolerance, openness and interculturalism and by teaching religious history in schools. The media, especially social networks, also have a role to play as a potential vector for intolerance and hatred or, conversely, a promoter of cultural rapprochement for peace.

My delegation believes that if we want to build a culture of peace, especially in Africa, we must come together to reflect and act methodically, through initiatives that are new and of an entirely different nature. Such initiatives must go beyond the legitimate security response that is required for the fight against all types of violent extremism, particularly those with religious connotations. Only systematic and sincere interreligious and intercultural dialogue will help us to overcome disaster in this area.

That is the objective and scope of the African initiative for peace education and development through interfaith and intercultural dialogue undertaken by the Government of the Republic of Benin. It will be officially launched in Cotonou from 26 to 29 May 2015, at an international symposium that we will facilitate. That initiative already has the support of many partners, among which I would like to acknowledge and thank the Alliance of Civilizations, UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme and the Economic Community of West African States. It is a key concern in Africa today and will be the subject of the decisions taken at the next summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in January 2015. It aims at countering the resurgence of religious extremism in Africa by addressing its roots.

That initiative is being undertaken in parallel with two others, namely the international symposium on dialogue between indigenous religions, Christianity and Islam in service of peace, held in Cotonou on 20 and 21 August 2007 under the auspices of UNESCO and, more recently, the international symposium on interreligious dialogue, also held in Cotonou, from 3 to 5 March 2014, under the presidency of Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

As a foretaste of the Cotonou symposium, I would like to inform the Assembly that the delegation of Benin will shortly hold a side event on that initiative in the Trusteeship Council Chamber from 1.15 p.m. to 2.15 p.m. At the event, the ins and outs of the initiative will be presented to members in detail. We cordially invite all members who understand the enormous

promise that that noble initiative holds. We need their support and contributions for the success of the initiative.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba attaches great importance to this debate. Promoting a culture of peace is the essence of the United Nations. The Organization's founders expressed in the Charter the aspirations of their peoples to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, their faith in the dignity and worth of the human person and the need to promote social progress and better standards of life in a larger understanding of freedom. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, those founding objectives remain the driving force behind the work of the United Nations.

Cuba reiterates its full commitment to the fulfilment of the Charter of the United Nations, including the purposes and principles set forth therein, and stresses that its work in terms of international relations is inspired by the need to promote a culture of peace in all areas.

The aim of further strengthening the global movement for a culture of peace, noted in both documents, is very relevant, as emphasized by the General Assembly in resolution 68/125 and reiterated in draft resolution A/69/L.34, which is proposed for adoption today. Progress towards the full development of a culture of peace is achieved through a set of Organization values, attitudes, traditions, behaviours and lifestyles that the States Members of the United Nations have defined as part of the concept of culture of peace, whose essential elements, among others, are respect for life; the end of violence and the promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation; full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States; non-interference in matters that are basically under the domestic jurisdiction of States, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law; commitment to the peaceful settlement of conflicts; efforts to meet the needs of present and future generations with regard to development and the protection of the environment; and respect for and the promotion of the right to development.

The promotion of a culture of peace requires the education of individuals from a very early age. At the national level, school, family and society as a whole are responsible for instilling the values, attitudes

and behaviours that are needed to develop a culture of peace. They must be accompanied by similar and complementary actions at the regional and international levels. Member States have the responsibility of complying with the Charter of the United Nations and other international treaties to which they are party and that are part of international law.

A culture of peace cannot be achieved through the threat or use of force in international relations. A culture of peace cannot be achieved through actions aimed at overthrowing Governments that have been legitimately constituted through the application of domestic law established by the sovereign decision of its people. A culture of peace cannot be achieved through the existence of nuclear weapons that, almost 70 years after the bombings of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, threaten to exterminate humankind and the environment with even greater power. No weapon of mass destruction is compatible with the culture of peace.

Imposing national agendas on other peoples through economic, commercial, financial or military blockades is a criminal and immoral way to obstruct progress towards a culture of peace. Developing a culture of peace also requires unequivocally condemning all acts, methods and practices of terrorism and taking concrete actions to counter them, regardless of their forms and manifestations, wherever and by whomever they are committed, including State terrorism. It would be inconceivable to achieve a genuine culture of peace for peoples oppressed by colonialism and deprived of the exercise of the right to self-determination and independence.

The region of Latin America and the Caribbean is in the vanguard of applying measures that contribute to strengthening a culture of peace. As is well known, for example, the region established the first densely populated zone free of nuclear weapons through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and all Member States of the region are also States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. The Latin American and Caribbean peoples have shown their commitment to the reaffirmation of peace and negotiated solutions to conflicts by declaring the region to be a zone of peace as one outcome of the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in January in Havana. CELAC and the declaration of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace are genuine contributions to the culture of peace and tangible

examples of how, with political will, the obstacles to peaceful coexistence and solidarity among our peoples can be overcome.

Mr. Tuy (Cambodia): First of all, I wish to associate myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN). I would also to highlight certain points in my own national capacity.

Cambodia underlines the importance of the culture of peace and believes that it must be cherished in the hearts of the peoples of the world, since we recognize that conflicts and war can erupt in a matter of days, while peace takes years to achieve. Unfortunately, we have seen armed conflicts continue to rage and to claim the lives of combatants and civilians alike, including children, in some parts of the world. Violent extremism is still a threat to peace and development.

The United Nations has been playing an important role in containing conflicts through various activities and interventions in conflict areas, and promoting its development agenda, which our leaders have agreed to. My country believes that peace and development are interlinked. We have all agreed to adopt the post-2015 development agenda as our theme for the coming years, in particular to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations.

As a post-conflict country ravaged by the scourge of war in recent decades, and while working to rehabilitate itself, Cambodia views the culture of peace as its core value and adheres to the principles of the Charter of ASEAN and the Charter of the United Nations. Peace and stability are the long-term goal of ASEAN. Cambodia also attaches great importance to the adoption of regional confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy through various annual meetings in the framework of ASEAN with all our dialogue partners, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and regional seminars and workshops. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, which is a legal tool aimed at promoting peace, amity and cooperation, has become more popular, with 32 countries joining as high contracting parties, while other countries are eager to join.

Cambodia welcomed General Assembly resolution 55/282, which was adopted at its fifty-fifth session to proclaim the International Day of Peace. On 21 September this year, in joining the international

community to mark the occasion, the Prime Minister of Cambodia addressed the nation on the importance of the Day and outlined Cambodia's achievements and commitments aimed at curbing, reducing and ending armed conflicts and wars around the world. More importantly, Cambodia also welcomed resolution 61/271, which proclaimed 2 October — the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of non-violence campaigns, who struggled to bring national independence to India in 1947 — the International Day of Non-Violence.

While war makes for fragility and cannot be an option, peace must be maintained through confidence-building measures and respect for international norms and the rule of law. My delegation therefore noted with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General (A/69/413), which highlights the work being done by United Nations agencies, particularly UNESCO, to promote education, dialogue, reconciliation, interreligious dialogue and a rights-based approach. The report concludes by calling for an increasingly integrated approach by United Nations entities.

While acknowledging the importance of all religions in contributing to a culture of peace, my delegation believes it is vital to instil in younger generations the drive to embrace peace and live in harmony. To that end, Cambodia has sponsored the draft resolution on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/69/L.41), to be adopted by consensus in the Assembly today.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank India for initiating a resolution establishing an International Day of Yoga (resolution 69/131), dedicated to enhancing the health of people around the world, which was sponsored by a large number of countries, including my country, and adopted by the Assembly last week without a vote.

Mr. Dehmani (Islamic Republic of Iran): The agenda item we are discussing today, and the draft resolutions we will shortly be taking action on (A/69/L.34 and A/69/L.41), have acquired increasing importance in the past few months and years. They were important to begin with because of their focus on peace, the single most important pillar on which our Organization was founded, and because of their emphasis on the need to develop an appropriate culture of peacebuilding, the primary foundation on which just and long-lasting peace should be built. The reason they have acquired

further importance is owing to the increasing activity, especially in our region, of wicked elements that are inherently opposed to peace and are anathema to a culture of peace. In that context, we are all aware of the plight of the peoples of Iraq and Syria as a result of the actions of forces of blind and dark violence.

As a culture of peace, as developed in General Assembly resolutions, has an impact mainly on individuals and communities, the expectation is that the lofty and noble ideals incorporated into today's draft resolutions will help decrease and eventually eliminate the support that the terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq receive from various parts of the region and beyond, including from certain individuals and communities. Similarly, we should redouble our efforts to implement the draft resolutions, thus fighting the counter-culture of violence and extremism that is corrupting the minds of some young people.

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to efforts to promote peace, moderation, dialogue and understanding among cultures, religions and civilizations. Last year my Government took the initiative of proposing a resolution on a world against violence and violent extremism (68/127) that the Assembly adopted by consensus. The initiative came from His Excellency Mr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in his speech in the general debate of the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session (see A/68/PV.6, p. 16). The widespread support it has enjoyed shows the importance of the matter in the eyes of the world, as well as the urgent need for resolute coordinated action by the international community designed to address the rising phenomenon of violent extremism.

Developments since the resolution's adoption bear witness to the relevance of its call and to how essential it is that all nations work to curb violent extremism. We are pleased to see growing awareness in every region and international forum, as well as in academia, the media and civil society, of the need to adopt policies and take action to counter violent extremism. Last week, the first international World against Violence and Violent Extremism Conference was held in Tehran, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in which representatives of Governments, academia and civil society from more than 50 countries participated. The Conference culminated with the adoption of a declaration and plan of action that is being circulated to the Assembly as a document under today's agenda item. The Declaration

and Plan of Action emphasizes norms and principles promoting peace and tolerance within societies and among peoples and communities, and enumerates concrete actions that should be taken to implement those norms and principles.

In our globalized world, no evil can be contained in one region. Violence and violent extremism, and the cultures that feed them, are as contagious as Ebola and H1N1 flu, and affect the entire world in the same way that carbon dioxide does, regardless of where they originate. The culture that feeds this new type of violence is already on the move, plaguing near and distant societies alike. Today violent extremists and other enemies of peace are from many different countries, ethnicities and nationalities. As the challenges to peace have become global, so should any action being taken against them. Mobilizing the global population against the enemies of peace is therefore now a necessity, and a global dialogue is the starting point from which to address that necessity.

The preamble to the UNESCO Constitution declares that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". If we are to win the battle between extremism and moderation, between tolerance and bigotry, we should start by changing minds. The violent extremists who assume that they are the only ones who deserve to live are mentally poised to oppose peace. No religion teaches its followers that they are the only ones who deserve to live. Killing innocent people in the name of religion is an absolute distortion of religion. The voices of wisdom of all religions should now close ranks and reiterate their absolute loyalty to peace and tolerance.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2, of 19 October 1994, I now give the floor to the observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Lobry-Boulanger (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/69/413) and the progress described in the report led by UNESCO, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the Peacebuilding Commission, United Nations Volunteers, UN-Women and many other United Nations entities.

More specifically, the IFRC agrees with the Secretary-General's emphasis on the interconnectedness between the culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, and his call for

“an increasingly integrated approach on the part of the entities of the United Nations system to these problems, particularly in their activities at the field level” (*A/69/413, para. 95*),

as exemplified by the single report presented this year.

The IFRC is strongly committed to fostering a global culture of respect for peace and non-violence, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion in which human values and dignity are truly celebrated. Indeed, promoting social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace is one of our three strategic aims for the present decade. The report states that turning a culture of violence into one of peace requires a global mind and behaviour shift from the way we currently think and interact — from being locked into differences to valuing diversity and pluralism; from adverse reaction to joint response and proactive prevention; from exclusion based on fear to connection based on a common humanity; and from resort to verbal and physical violence when feeling threatened to constructive dialogue and trust.

In this framework, we believe that women, young people and children are powerful sources of change, whose energy and skills need to be harnessed when pursuing societal transformation leading to a culture of non-violence and peace. Furthermore, we believe that education and volunteerism are crucial pillars when pursuing societal transformation leading to a culture of non-violence and peace.

Women continue to suffer from the impact of economic and financial crisis. They are disproportionately vulnerable and affected by other humanitarian challenges as well, such as poverty, climate change, food insecurity, migration, internal displacement and conflict, which result in additional vulnerabilities. Yet, women are also disproportionately affected by the impact of natural disasters, the scarcity of resources and the lack of or inequitable access to adequate health and education services and facilities. We also know that, unfortunately, women continue to be subjected to unacceptable levels of violence.

Accordingly, the IFRC ensures that in responding to emergencies, appropriate violence prevention, mitigation and response strategies, including counseling for survivors of violence, are incorporated

into our programming. The IFRC additionally ensures that gender considerations are built into all areas of our work, including water and sanitation, health care and shelter. All of this is in line with our strategic framework on gender diversity issues. In other words, we identify and address the distinct needs and capacities of women, girls, boys and men of all ages and abilities.

In order to confront the underlying causes of vulnerability and foster safe and resilient communities, we also encourage an increase in and a strengthening of volunteer programmes. By enhancing volunteerism, we are able to put forward a two-fold approach to supporting women. First, women volunteers, both young and old, are best suited to providing humanitarian assistance to their communities, and in particular to other women. Secondly, experience has shown that, when engaged, women more easily find support systems that help them build the confidence necessary to face their day-to-day problems.

As stressed in the Secretary-General's Global Education First initiative, the importance of ensuring access to quality education for all is widely agreed upon. The essential questions remaining are: what kind of education do we want to provide? What should be its purpose and, hence, content in terms of the overarching human values that we want education to instil? The IFRC strongly believes that education in school or non-formal settings is not only about developing cognition or knowledge, but also about instilling and nurturing human values, as well as the social and life skills that enable individuals to act and interact harmoniously and constructively. The IFRC believes that if we wish to work towards a world free of discrimination, exclusion and violence, education must instil such skills empathy, non-judgmental thinking, active listening, critical thinking, non-violent communication, collaborative negotiation and mediation.

When touching the heart, education fosters a genuine appreciation of and respect for diversity. Education is therefore essentially very much about learning to be and learning to live together. Yet, how is it possible to be non-violent in violent situations, or not to resort to violence in fragile environments? We believe that the answers start with acquiring the ability to “feel ourselves” — that is to say, analysing situations from the humanitarian perspective and then engaging in constructive actions. It is well documented that the application of such skills in fact reduces the likelihood

of resort to violence in response to others' violent behaviour.

Requiring an ability to engage in constructive dialogue and to respect diversity lessens the chance that children and young people will engage in discriminatory behaviours. It also reduces the likelihood of their resorting to violence to deal with differences or reduce tensions. This snowball effect of education positively impacts society as a whole by reducing the well-documented social and economic costs that result from violence and by creating safer and more inclusive communities. Family life, school, media and community interactions all constitute potential educational platforms to promote a culture of non-violence and peace.

Lastly, in addition to values and skills-based education to address the underlying cause of violence, we strongly encourage an increase in and strengthening of volunteering opportunities. Volunteering, which we consider to be a non-formal education, is at the heart of community-building and a catalyst for social cohesion. Beyond the benefits that I outlined earlier for women and girls, it is an excellent way for individuals to contribute to their communities by working together with people from diverse backgrounds, cultures and religions. It strengthens community support systems, and thereby increases resilience and reduces vulnerability to violent actions.

In conclusion, we believe that the cumulative effect of non-cognitive approaches within a skills- and values-based education, combined with volunteering, positively impacts society as a whole by reducing the well-proven social and economic impact of violence and by creating safer and more inclusive communities.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 14.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/69/L.34 and A/69/L.41, as orally revised. In connection with draft resolution A/69/L.34, entitled "Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace", I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Elliot (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of A/69/L.34: Benin, Bulgaria, Burkino Faso, Cameroon,

Chile, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Georgia, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Mali, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Palau, the Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, Suriname, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.34?

Draft resolution A/69/L.34 was adopted (resolution 69/139).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.41, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace", as orally revised.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Elliot (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/69/L.41: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, China, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Morocco, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey and Viet Nam.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.41, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/69/L.41, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 69/140).

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

Mr. Samvelian (Armenia): Armenia recognizes and fully shares the importance of resolution 69/140, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace", and commends the efforts of its main sponsors on

the basis of its strong belief that such dialogues can enhance peace and social stability, respect for diversity at the global, regional, national and local levels, and an environment conducive to peace and mutual understanding. We believe that interreligious and intercultural dialogue should aim at promoting social cohesion, peace and development and should strongly condemn xenophobia, racism and discrimination in all its forms and manifestations.

Having said that, Armenia hopes that Azerbaijan's opportunity to host the 2016 Global Forum, mentioned in paragraph 10 of the resolution, which in particular refers to the promotion of mutual understanding among different civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs, will strongly discourage the Government of Azerbaijan from further conducting its Government-sponsored policy of Armenia-phobia and hatred against Armenians, and persuade Azerbaijan to review and reconsider its policy of hostility towards a neighbouring country, while contributing towards amity and mutual understanding as an important tool in efforts aimed at achieving peace and stability at the regional and global levels.

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

I give the floor to the representative of Italy to make a statement after adoption.

Mrs. Gatto (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) on resolution 69/140, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace". The European Union would like to extend its thanks to the delegations of Pakistan and the Philippines for the very constructive spirit in which they led the consultation process.

The European Union appreciates the efforts of the main sponsors to take into account some of the remaining concerns raised in previous years, and acknowledges that the text has continued to improve over the years. We appreciate in particular the changes made in the thirteenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 10, 12 and 18. However, not all our concerns were reflected in the text. In particular, the European Union would like to stress that it continues to attach importance to always mentioning religion or belief in conjunction with one another, and to the fact that freedom of religion or belief applies to individuals as right-holders who may exercise this right either

within a community, including as religious minorities, with others or individually.

As the EU highly values the contribution of civil society to the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, it believes that dialogue can be successful only in an environment where all voices can be heard, human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected, and a free and open media landscape exists. The European Union also believes that it is important that we reflect on the respective roles of Governments and civil society. It is particularly important that Governments themselves take positive actions to create conditions where the persecution of individuals on the grounds of their religion or beliefs is not condoned, rather than expecting civil society or international bodies alone to take action.

Finally, we trust that the sponsors will look positively into the suggestion of making this resolution a biennial initiative.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

Agenda item 128

Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him

Draft resolution (A/69/L.42)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.42.

Mr. Thöresson (Sweden): I have asked for the floor today to introduce a draft resolution concerning the investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him. It is my pleasure to introduce the draft resolution, as contained in document A/69/L.42, on behalf of the 20 original sponsors. We are grateful to all those who have signed up today and of course will warmly welcome any additional sponsors.

The words and deeds on the pursuit of peace of Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, are well known to the Assembly. His influence on the role and function of the Organization was profound even in his lifetime. But his tenure, marked by vision and pragmatism,

also paved the way for policies and practices that have been mainstreamed and consolidated in ways we now take for granted. Hammarskjöld promoted the integrity and independence of the United Nations and of the Secretary-General — ideals that are rarely questioned nowadays and that are of crucial importance as the United Nations has expanded to near-universal membership. He conceived the concept of preventive diplomacy and set ground-breaking examples for the Secretary-General's direct diplomatic engagement. Furthermore, in devising the first armed United Nations peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Emergency Force, in 1956, he laid the foundation for what remains one of the most important and visible instruments in the United Nations toolbox. Dag Hammarskjöld's legacy has thus remained relevant throughout the half-century that has passed since that fateful day in September of 1961 when he met his destiny. But while we know a lot about his life and contributions, some things surrounding the incident in which his life came to an abrupt and violent end are still unclear.

What we do know is that on the night of 17 and 18 September 1961, a Swedish aircraft carrying 16 people, one of them Dag Hammarskjöld, crashed near Ndola, in what was then Northern Rhodesia and is now Zambia. Everyone on the plane died. Over the years, a number of studies have been published on the background, circumstances and cause of the crash. None of them, however, has been recognized as having arrived at a definitive explanation of the crash. That also holds true for the investigations of the United Nations itself.

The General Assembly, through resolution 1759 (XVII) of 26 October 1962, considered the United Nations inquiry's report of the crash (A/5069) and requested that the Secretary-General inform the Assembly of any new evidence relating to the disaster. The Secretary-General, in a note of 21 March 2014, transmitted to the General Assembly the report of the independent Hammarskjöld Commission (A/68/800, annex). In the note, the Secretary-General made the assessment that the report includes new evidence and suggested that the General Assembly consider three different options for examining the new information. The note underlined that Dag Hammarskjöld's unparalleled service and sacrifice, and his legacy, compel us to seek to learn the whole truth of the circumstances leading to his tragic death and that of the members of the party accompanying him.

Sweden welcomes the report of the Hammarskjöld Commission and the Secretary-General's request that the General Assembly consider it. We join him in encouraging Member States to release any relevant records that may bring new information regarding the plane crash, and welcome all that can be done to further clarify the matter. Such actions should be carried out with due regard for the integrity of Dag Hammarskjöld and the others who were killed, as well as their families, some of whom are present here today. We are thus heeding the Secretary-General's call in introducing the draft resolution in the Assembly. At this stage, we consider it proper, in line with what the Hammarskjöld Commission suggested, not to resume the United Nations inquiry as a whole but instead to engage in a focused and measured resumption.

Following informal consultations over the past few weeks, Sweden has crafted a draft resolution with three operational elements. Paragraph 1 requests that the Secretary-General appoint an independent panel of experts to examine the new information and assess its probative value. Paragraph 2 encourages Member States to release any relevant records in their possession and provide the Secretary-General with relevant information related to the death of Dag Hammarskjöld and the members of the party accompanying him. Finally, paragraph 3 requests that the Secretary-General report to the General Assembly at its seventieth session on the progress made. The financial implications of the draft resolution will be considered by the Fifth Committee later this week.

Sweden is grateful for the support we have already received for this initiative, and particularly for Zambia's cooperation. We are equally grateful to Norway, Austria, Myanmar, Peru, Egypt, Ghana and the Republic of Korea, the Member States that have or have had nationals who have served as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Sweden is also very grateful for the cooperative spirit and flexibility shown by all the delegations that have assisted us in the initiative.

The purpose of the draft resolution is to help shed new light on the circumstances surrounding the death of Dag Hammarskjöld and those on board his flight, not only by bringing existing documents forward but also by providing the conditions necessary so that witnesses whose testimony has so far not been given due attention can finally be heard. It is my Government's sincere hope that we will thus be able to begin our final path to closure, out of respect for the memory and dignity

of Dag Hammarskjöld, those who perished with him and those otherwise involved. We therefore seek the Assembly's support for the resolution.

The Acting President: I would like to inform members that draft resolution A/69/L.42, entitled "Investigation into the conditions and circumstances

resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him", will be considered at a later date to be announced.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 128.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.