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# General Assembly

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Second Committee  
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### **SECOND COMMITTEE APPROVES TEXT DEMANDING END TO ISRAEL'S EXPLOITATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN OCCUPIED ARAB LANDS**

#### **Members Also Pass Three Draft Resolutions On Globalization, Countries in Special Situations, Sustainable Development**

The General Assembly would demand that Israel stop exploiting, damaging, depleting and endangering the natural resources in occupied Arab lands, by the terms of one of four draft resolutions approved today by the Second Committee (Economic and Financial).

It took that action by a recorded vote of 156 in favour to 5 against (Canada, Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Marshall Islands, United States), with 7 abstentions (Australia, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Papua New Guinea).

By other terms of the text — titled "Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources" — the Assembly would recognize the right of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples to claim restitution for such illegal actions. It would also call upon Israel to cease all actions that harmed the environment in all the territories under its occupation, as well as the destruction of infrastructure, including water pipelines and sewage networks.

Israel's representative, expressing disappointment that the Committee had again chosen to squander its valuable time on a "sideshow" whose sole mission was to disparage her country, said Israelis and Palestinians shared the same environmental challenges, which would only be resolved by working together rather than against each other. Israel continued to cooperate extensively with the Palestinian Authority on environmental issues, she added.

The biased draft resolution did nothing to advance the interest of the Palestinians, she continued. Like its predecessors, it would end up "collecting dust on a shelf", without bringing any change whatsoever for people in the region. If its supporters genuinely cared about the welfare of the Palestinian people and peace in the region, they would encourage cooperation and not antagonism, she emphasized. The text had no place in a United Nations forum, and everyone present who genuinely sought a solution to the region's problems should devote their energies to constructive action instead of "useless rituals".

The observer for Palestine said the text reaffirmed the Palestinian right to sovereignty over their natural resources, which was essential on the path to growth and development. The draft resolution once again reminded the occupying Power of the international community's rejection of its occupation of Palestinian territory, he noted. It also called upon Israel to cease violations of international conventions and laws and to stop stealing land and water, and destroying plantations and the environment.

Everything that Israel's representative had said about cooperation was "a mirage", he continued, pointing out that Palestine was currently suffering a "barbaric attack" by the Israeli military that had already accounted for more than 150 deaths, including over 40 children. Although Israel presented initiatives designed to suggest that it was a civilized country, committed to finding solutions to the world's social, economic and environmental problems, it was actually an occupier and a violator of international norms, he said.

In other action today, the Committee approved — by a recorded vote of 152 in favour to 7 against (Australia, Canada, Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Nauru, United States), with 3 abstentions (Cameroon, Colombia, Panama) — a draft resolution titled “Oil slick on Lebanese shores”.

By its terms, the Assembly would reiterate, for the seventh consecutive year, its deep concern over the destruction by the Israeli Air Force of oil storage tanks near Lebanon’s El-Jiyeh electric power plant due to its adverse implications for sustainable development in that country. By other terms, the Assembly would request that Israel assume responsibility for paying prompt and adequate compensation to Lebanon and Syria — whose shores had also been partially polluted — which should pay for the cost of restoring the marine environment and repairing environmental damage.

Following the vote, Israel’s representative said he was disappointed that the Committee had chosen to participate in “this annual ritual”. Year after year, the crucial work of the Committee had been “hijacked” by some delegations driven by narrow political motivations. The text failed to put the 2006 war into context, ignoring the fact that the Hizbullah terrorist organization had been the agitator, having launched rockets across international borders. It also ignored the fact that Hizbullah rockets killed and maimed Israelis, and failed to mention the destruction that those rockets caused in Israel, including damage to endangered fauna and flora caused by forest fires.

Yet the supporters of the text had managed to let the Lebanese escape with impunity, he continued. The draft omitted Israel’s extensive cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, which worked to address the environmental situation along the coast of Lebanon. That kind of one-sided, political draft resolution contributed nothing at all to the valuable work of the Second Committee, he stressed, calling upon all delegations who believed in the importance of its work to put an end to “this sad, yearly spectacle”.

Lebanon’s representative said the oil slick was a devastating environmental disaster that had caused harm and damage to social and economic development, as well as environmental protection. Israel had targeted a civilian utility plant serving the Lebanese population, and six years after the attack, the oil slick continued to threaten human health, economic growth and efforts for sustainable development, she said, adding that her country’s inability to contain the spread of oil in the early critical stages, due to Israel’s air and marine blockade, had led to prolonged adverse effects that still existed today.

She went on to say that her country was still heavily engaged in the clean up, waste management and rehabilitation. Year after year, the General Assembly reiterated its request for the Government of Israel to assume responsibility for paying prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon, for the cost of repairing the environmental damage. Today’s vote and overwhelming support reflected and strengthened international commitment to sustainable development and the rule of law, she said.

The Committee then approved — by a recorded vote of 113 in favour to 47 against, with 5 abstentions ( Australia, Cambodia, Republic of Korea, Turkey, Ukraine) — a draft resolution on globalization and interdependence titled “Towards a New International Economic Order”.

By its terms, the General Assembly would reaffirm the need to continue working towards a new international economic order based on the principles of equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest, cooperation and solidarity among all States; and to enhance the voice of developing countries in international economic decision-making and norm-setting. It would also reaffirm the critical role of a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system in stimulating economic growth and development worldwide.

Following the vote, the representative of the United States said the draft resolution fell short of a useful document that would move the international economic dialogue forward. The challenges that the global economy faced today were very different from those it had faced in the 1970s. Clearly the world community would have to work together to develop a more effective and inclusive economic development system, she said, adding that the substance of today’s text remained dated, divisive and counterproductive, for which reason the United States had voted against it.

The representative of Cyprus, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said the draft resolution did not reflect the current international order, adding that the world situation had been changed considerably by globalisation, technological innovation and the emergence of new economic actors. The text, therefore, did not provide a useful framework for addressing the multiple challenges of today’s globalized world.

Cuba's representative, noting that his delegation had voted in favour of the text, pointed out that the gap between developed and developing countries continued to grow in a world governed by a system built before most of the latter had even become States. It was important to work towards an economic order different to the current one, he emphasized, recalling that efforts to that end had begun 38 years earlier, amid a dreadful economic situation that had affected the developing world particularly badly. With a similar situation now prevailing, it was important to resume action to try and protect developing countries, but developed countries were keen to avoid treating the core problems, he said.

The Committee went on to approve, without vote, a draft resolution titled "Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcomes of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Countries and Donor Countries and international Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation".

By its terms the General Assembly would reaffirm the right of access of landlocked countries to and from the sea, and freedom of transit through the territory of transit countries by all means of transport, in accordance with the applicable rules of international law. It would call upon development partners as well as multilateral and regional financial and development institutions to provide landlocked and transit developing countries with appropriate, substantial and better-coordinated technical and financial assistance, particularly in the form of grants or concessionary loans, for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

In earlier business, the Committee heard the introduction of two draft resolutions, the first titled "Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development", and the second "Harmony with Nature".

Also speaking today were representatives of Algeria (on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China), Bangladesh, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, France, Mexico, Republic of Korea and Tajikistan.

Speaking in exercise of the right of reply were a representative of Israel and an observer for Palestine.

The Second Committee will meet again on Wednesday, 28 November, to take action on outstanding draft resolutions.

### Background

The Second Committee (Economic and Financial) met this morning to take action on draft resolutions relating to the following agenda items: sustainable development; globalization and interdependence; specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcomes of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Countries and Donor Countries and international Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation; and permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources.

### Introduction of Draft Resolutions

SIRODJIDIN M. ASLOV ([Tajikistan](#)) introduced a draft resolution titled "Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development" (document A/C.2/67/L.38).

SACHA SERGIO LLORENTTY SOLÍZ ([Bolivia](#)) then introduced a draft titled "Harmony with Nature" (document A/C.2/67/L.37).

### Action on Drafts

The Committee took up the text "Oil slick on Lebanese shores" (document A/C.2/6/L.13/Rev.1).

After the representative of Israel requested a recorded vote, the Committee approved the text by a recorded vote of 152 in favour to 7 against (Australia, Canada, Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Nauru, United States), with 3 abstentions (Colombia, Congo, Panama).

The representative of Israel expressed disappointment that the Committee's crucial work had again been "hijacked" by delegations with narrow political motivations. The resolution ignored the fact that the 2006 war had been started by the Hizbullah terrorist organization, which had launched rockets that had killed and maimed Israelis and damaged endangered flora and fauna, he added. However, supporters of the draft had allowed Lebanon to escape with impunity on that issue, while Israel's cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to address the situation of Lebanon's coastline went unnoticed. The text was one-sided and political, he said, adding that it contributed nothing to the Committee's valuable work.

The representative of Lebanon said the oil slick was a devastating environmental disaster that had harmed social and economic development. Israel had targeted a civilian utility plant serving the Lebanese population and six years later, the slick continued to threaten health, economic growth and efforts for sustainable development. Israel's air and marine blockade had prevented an early response to the slick, and had prolonged its adverse effects, which persisted today. Lebanon was still heavily engaged in the clean-up, waste management and rehabilitation, she said, recalling that the General Assembly had repeatedly reiterated its request for the Government of Israel to assume responsibility for paying prompt and adequate compensation to cover the cost of repairing the environmental damage. The vote and overwhelming support reflected strengthened international commitment to sustainable development and the rule of law, she said.

Taking up the draft resolution on globalization and interdependence titled "Towards a new international economic order" (document A/C.2/67/L.3/Rev.1), the Committee approved it by a recorded vote of 113 in favour to 47 against with 5 abstentions (Australia, Cambodia, Republic of Korea, Turkey, Ukraine).

Following the vote, the representative of the United States said the draft resolution fell short of a useful document that would move the international economic dialogue forward. The challenges that the global economy faced today were very different from those of the 1970s. Clearly the world community needed to work together to develop a more effective and inclusive economic development system, she said. The substance of the text was dated, divisive and counter-productive and the United States had, therefore, voted against it.

The representative of Canada, also speaking in explanation of position, said she was disappointed to see the draft resolution on the agenda once again. While the global economy faced dire challenges, the text sent conflicting messages on how to deal with common global challenges. Furthermore, it did not complement ongoing cooperation efforts.

The representative of Mexico said she had voted in favour of the draft resolution and stressed the need to avoid protectionist measures.

The representative of Cuba, making a general statement, said the gap between developed and developing countries continued to grow in a world governed by a system built before most developing countries had even become States. It was important to work towards a different economic order, he said, recalling that efforts to that end had begun 38 years ago, when the world had faced a dreadful economic situation that affected developing countries particularly badly. With a similar situation now prevailing, it was important to resume action to try and protect the developing world, but developed countries were keen to avoid treating the core problems, he said, calling on the United Nations to take the lead and bring about the necessary changes.

As the Committee took up the draft "Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries" (document A/C.2/67/L39), the Committee Secretary made a statement on its programme budget implications.

The Committee then approved the text without a vote, as orally corrected.

The representative of Bolivia said he agreed with the consensus on the subject. While not actually a landlocked country, Bolivia considered itself temporarily deprived of access to its coastline by an invasion, and reserved the right to use all peaceful means to regain that access.

The representative of Chile also welcomed the consensus action, saying that, as a transit country, Chile granted full access to landlocked States, and was committed to the international regime on landlocked and transit countries.

The representative of the United States said her delegation was pleased to join the consensus and looked forward to the 10-year review conference. While thanking the Committee Secretary for the

statement on programme budget implications, she expressed disappointment that they had not been revealed until after discussions on the draft.

The Committee then approved the text without a vote, withdrawing the text contained in document A/C.2/67/L.2.

As the Committee took up the draft on the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian and other Arab populations in occupied lands over their natural resources (document A/C.2/67/L.33), the representative of the Republic of Korea pointed out that his delegation was not a co-sponsor.

The Committee Chair apologized, saying he had meant to refer to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Speaking in explanation of position, the representative of Israel expressed disappointment that the Committee continued to waste time on the "sideshow" of discussing the draft. Israelis and Palestinians shared the same environmental challenges, which would only be solved through working together, not against each other, she said, noting that her country continued to cooperate with the Palestinian Authority on environmental issues.

The observer for Palestine, making a general statement, stressed that the text reaffirmed the Palestinian right to sovereignty over their natural resources, which were its path to growth and development. She once again reminded Israel, the occupying Power, of the international community's position, which rejected the occupation of Palestinian territory. It called upon Israel to cease violations of international conventions and laws and to stop stealing land, water and destroying plantations and the environment. Everything the Israeli delegate had said about cooperation was "a mirage", and in fact, Palestine was currently suffering a "barbaric attack" by the Israeli military that had already accounted for more than 150 lives, including over 40 children. While Israel presented initiatives designed to suggest that it was a civilized country, committed to finding solutions to the world's social, economic and environmental problems, it was actually an occupier and a violator of international norms, he said.

#### Right of Reply

The representative of Israel, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said she would not trade insults or claims. Israel had disengaged from Gaza in 2005 and had given it the opportunity to develop. Its current actions had one objective: to target Hamas, who was paralysing the Israeli population with constant rocket attacks. No nation would allow such attacks on its citizens, she emphasized, pointing out that a bomb attack had just taken place in Tel Aviv.

The observer for Palestine, also speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said the Israeli delegate continued to submit misinformation to the Committee. Gaza remained under blockade since the "so-called withdrawal by Israel from the Gaza strip". The enclave remained effectively occupied, and Israel's right to self-defence did not allow the massacres of children, he said, pointing out that the attacks had come just before the beginning of Israel's election campaign.

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