



General Assembly

GA/EF/3387

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Sixty-eighth General Assembly
Second Committee
35th & 36th Meetings (AM & PM)

**SECOND COMMITTEE APPROVES TEXT DEMANDING ISRAEL COMPLY WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW,
END EXPLOITATION OF ARAB RESOURCES**

**Members Also Pass Draft Resolutions
On Oil Slick off Lebanon, Unilateral Economic Measures, Climate Change**

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

It took that action by a recorded vote of 162 in favour to 5 against (Canada, Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Palau, United States), with 9 abstentions (Australia, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Honduras, Jamaica, Malawi, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Tonga).

By other terms of the text — entitled “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 call upon Israel to comply with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, with respect to the alteration of the character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

It would call upon Israel to halt all actions, including those perpetrated by Israeli settlers, harming the environment, including the dumping of waste materials, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan. By other terms, it would stress that the wall and settlements being constructed by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, were contrary to international law and were depriving the Palestinian people of their natural resources.

Israel’s representative said the Committee was engaged in a meaningless exercise, rather than addressing sustainable development and poverty issues. The resolution did nothing to improve the situation between Israel and Palestine and was motivated by anti-Israeli sentiment, designed to ferment division and unilateralism at a time when such issues could only be resolved through negotiation. He said that Israel’s hand remained outstretched.

The observer for the State of Palestine said the Committee’s approval of the draft resolution was a testament to the importance attached by States to development and prosperity. The overwhelming majority had voted in favour of it, which reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to sovereignty over their natural resources, which were vital for progress. The international community had clearly spoken against Israel’s occupation.

In other action today, the Committee approved — by a recorded vote of 165 in favour to 6 against (Australia, Canada, Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Palau, United States), with 6 abstentions (Cameroon, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Tonga) — a draft resolution entitled “Oil slick on Lebanese shores”.

By its terms the General Assembly would reiterate, for the eighth consecutive year, its concern about the adverse implications of the destruction by the Israeli Air Force of the oil storage tanks in the vicinity of Lebanon’s Jiyeh electric power plant, for the achievement of sustainable development in the country. By other terms it would reiterate its request to Israel to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to

the Government of Lebanon and other countries directly affected by the oil slick, such as the Syrian Arab Republic, whose shores have been partially polluted.

Following the vote, the representative of Israel expressed disappointment in the proceedings and said the resolution was motivated by politics. The authors of the resolution had defamed Israel and did not mention his country's cooperation to address the environmental situation along the coast of Lebanon, as well as the assistance Israel had offered. The resolution encouraged an anti-Israel narrative and set a precedent for other States to act aggressively against their neighbours.

The representative of Lebanon expressed appreciation to the countries that voted in favour of the resolution. The oil slick continued to threaten human health and the environment. The damage that was inflicted was unquestionable and the claims made by Israel were misleading and invalid.

The Committee then approved — by a recorded vote of 124 in favour to 2 against (Israel, United States), with 52 abstentions – a draft resolution on “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries”.

By its terms the General Assembly would call upon the international community to condemn and reject the imposition of the use of such measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries.

It would also urge the international community to adopt measures to eliminate the use of unilateral coercive economic measures against developing countries that are not authorized by relevant organs of the United Nations or are inconsistent with the principles of international law and the principles of the multilateral trading system.

Following the vote, the representative of the United States said that each Member State had a sovereign right to determine how it wished to conduct international trade. The United States had applied sanctions as a way to achieve noble objectives. The General Assembly purported to limit the international community's ability to respond to threats against democracy or world security. Targeted sanctions could be an effective alternative to the use of force.

The representative of Lithuania, speaking on behalf of the European Union delegation, said its Member States abstained on the adoption of the resolution. It believed that unilateral economic measures should respect the principles of international law.

The Second Committee also approved a draft text entitled “Venue of the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 2016”, by which terms the General Assembly would take note of the report of the twenty-seventh special session of the Trade and Development Board and would welcome Peru's offer to host the 2016 Conference on Trade and Development.

The Committee also approved a draft resolution entitled “Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind” by which terms the Assembly would reaffirm that climate change was among the greatest challenges of our time, express alarm that the emissions of greenhouse gases continued to rise globally, and remain concerned that all countries were vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. It would also recognize the need to build on the existing political momentum with a view to achieving the ultimate objective of the Convention and to further advancing climate change negotiations.

In another act, the Committee approved a draft resolution entitled “The role of the international community in averting the radiation threat in Central Asia” by which the General Assembly would call upon the international community to assist the States of Central Asia in resolving the problems of uranium tailings ponds, and emphasize the importance of regional cooperation. It would also call upon the international community to continue the sharing of knowledge so as to resolve the problems of uranium and other radioactive and toxic tailings.

The Second Committee will meet again at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 19 November, to take action on all outstanding draft proposals.

Background

The Second Committee (Economic and Financial) met this morning to take action on several draft resolutions.

Introduction of Draft Resolutions

The representative of Fiji introduced, on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, a draft resolution entitled "Information and communications technologies for development" (document A/C.2/68/L.40).

He then presented the following drafts on sustainable development: "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.2/68/L.33); "Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" (document A/C.2/68/L.41); "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction" (document A/C.2/68/L.39); "Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its contribution to sustainable development" (document A/C.2/68/L.42); "Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its first universal session" (document A/C.2/68/L.32); and, "Harmony with Nature" (document A/C.2/68/L.43).

On globalization and interdependence, he tabled draft resolutions entitled "Development cooperation with middle-income countries" (document A/C.2/68/L.35) and "Culture and development" (document A/C.2/68/L.34). Finally, he presented a draft on "Agriculture development, food security and nutrition" (document A/C.2/68/L.28).

The representative of Panama introduced the draft resolution on "Sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Central America" (document A/C.2/68/L.30).

The representative of Lithuania introduced the draft resolution on "Cooperative measures to assess and increase awareness of environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea" (document A/C.2/68/L.37).

The representative of Israel introduced the draft resolution on "Agricultural technology for development" (document A/C.2/68/L.38).

The representative of Kyrgyzstan introduced a draft resolution on "The role of the international community in the prevention of the radiation threat in Central Asia" (document A/C.2/68/L.36).

Action on Drafts

The Committee first approved, without a vote, a draft decision entitled "Venue of the fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference" (document A/C.2/68/L.29).

The Committee then took up a draft resolution entitled "Unilateral economic measure as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries" (document A/C.2/68/L.12).

Prior to the vote, the representative of Belarus said that unilateral economic measures undermined the economic and social rights of populations. The United Nations must perform a full assessment of unilateral economic measures, with the resolution should sending a message to countries that are acting in contravention to the principles of sovereignty and human rights.

The Committee then approved the resolution by a recorded vote of 124 in favour to 2 against (Israel, United States), with 52 abstentions.

In explanation of its vote, the representative of the United States said that each Member State had a sovereign right to determine how it conducted international trade. The United States had applied sanctions as a way to achieve noble objectives. The General Assembly purported to limit the international community's ability to respond to threats against democracy or world security. Targeted sanctions could be an effective alternative to the use of force.

The representative of Lithuania, speaking on behalf of the European Union delegation, said its Member States abstained on the adoption of the resolution. The Union believed that unilateral economic measures should respect the principles of international law. It considered such measures admissible in certain circumstances and was committed to using sanctions as part of an integrated policy approach that included political dialogue.

The Committee then approved the draft resolution entitled "Oil slick on Lebanese shores" (document A/C.2/68/L.26) by a recorded vote of 165 in favour to 6 against (Australia, Canada, Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Palau, United States), with 6 abstentions (Cameroon, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Tonga).

The representative of Israel expressed disappointment in the proceedings and said the resolution was one-sided and motivated by politics. The authors of the resolution had defamed Israel and failed to mention his country's cooperation to address the environmental situation along the coast of Lebanon, as well as the

assistance Israel had offered to address the situation. The resolution encouraged an anti-Israel narrative in the halls of the United Nations and set a precedent for other States to act aggressively against their neighbours.

The representative of Lebanon expressed his appreciation to the countries that voted in favour of the resolution. The oil slick continued to threaten human health, the environment and the ability of Lebanon to achieve its sustainable development goals. The damage that was inflicted was unquestionable and the claims made by Israel were misleading and invalid.

The Committee then took up the resolution entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind" (document A/C.2/68/L.44).

The Committee Chair said it would be necessary to waive rule 120 — the "24 hour rule" — of the General Assembly's rules of procedure, given the text had only been circulated that morning. "As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the Committee unless copies of it have been circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting," he explained.

The representative of Pakistan proposed editorial corrections and the Committee then approved the draft, without a vote, as orally amended.

The representative of the United States said that addressing climate change was a priority for her Government. The resolution hampered efforts to address climate change efficiently and effectively. She said the language in the resolution did not contribute to the negotiations, particularly the reference to the "integrity of Mother Earth", which was not a universally recognized concept.

The representative of Japan said the resolution contained certain language inconsistent with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Committee then withdrew the previous version of the draft (document A/C.2/68/L.19) and approved the revised text.

The Committee next turned its attention to the draft resolution "The role of the international community in the prevention of the radiation threat in Central Asia" (document A/C.2/68/L.36).

The representative of Kyrgyzstan proposed editorial corrections.

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

The representative of Kyrgyzstan, taking the floor for a second time, emphasized the importance of averting the radiation threat in Central Asia and underscored the international community's role in that effort.

The Committee then turned to the "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" (document A/C.2/68/L.27). It approved the text by a recorded vote of 162 in favour to 5 against (Canada, Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Palau, United States), with 9 abstentions (Australia, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Honduras, Jamaica, Malawi, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Tonga).

The representative of Israel said the Committee was engaged in a meaningless exercise, rather than addressing sustainable development and poverty. At a time when resources of the United Nations were scarce, it was sad that the Committee's agenda was hijacked. The resolution did not improve the situation between Israel and Palestine and was motivated by anti-Israeli sentiment, designed to ferment division and unilateralism at a time when such issues could only be resolved through negotiation. He said that Israel's hand remained outstretched.

The observer for the State of Palestine said the Committee's approval of the draft resolution was a testament to the importance attached by States to development and prosperity. The overwhelming majority had voted in favour of the resolution, which reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to sovereignty over their natural resources, which were vital for progress. The resolution called on Israel to put an end to its violation of international instruments and cease its exploitation of Palestinian land and water resources, and to stop destroying agricultural land and polluting the environment. The international community had clearly spoken against the colonial nature of Israel's occupation. However, Israel faced the outstretched hands of the Palestinian people by confiscating land, building settlements and walls and destroying the capabilities and resources of the Palestinian people.

* * * * *