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GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL STRONGLY CONDEMN CONTINUED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

IN SYRIA, UNDER TERMS OF RESOLUTION APPROVED BY THIRD COMMITTEE

Also Approves Texts on Iran, Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Five Others Recommended, Including Resolution on Palestinian Self-Determination

The General Assembly would strongly condemn the continued widespread and systematic gross human rights violations by Syrian authorities and call on that Government to immediately end all such abuses and attacks against civilians, protect its population and fully comply with its obligations under international law, under the terms of a resolution approved today by the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural).

The Committee approved the text by a recorded vote of 132 in favour to 12 against, with 35 abstentions. It was one of a total eight texts approved today, and one of three focused exclusively on the human rights situations in specific countries. The other two country-specific texts concerned the human rights situations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran.

By further terms, the Assembly would urge Syrian authorities to immediately release all persons arbitrarily detained, and stress its support for the aspirations of the Syrian people for a peaceful, democratic and pluralistic society, in which there was no room for sectarianism or discrimination on ethnic, religious, linguistic or any other grounds, and based on the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

By other terms, the Assembly would welcome the report of the independent international commission of inquiry on Syria, but regret Syria's non-cooperation with that body. It would demand that Syria provide the commission immediate, full and unfettered entry and access to all areas of the country. In addition, it would express grave concern at the increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of the violence, and urge United Nations agencies to provide urgent and coordinated support.

During action on the text, Syria's delegates said his Government was being held responsible for everything that happened in the country. The text did not call for any accountability on the part of armed terrorist groups. Nor did it call for national dialogue to resolve the crisis, in line with the principles of peaceful dispute settlement, the six-point plan or the Geneva Declaration. The needed reform of political, economic and social life would not be achieved through political resolutions meant to exploit countries from United Nations rostrums.

Throughout the day, many delegates criticized the use of such country-specific resolutions, which they said set double standards and undermined international cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights. Rather, the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council was the main mechanism for considering such questions, a process which should be conducted in a non-partial and non-politicized manner.

The Committee's consensus approval of the draft resolution on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea marked the first time it acted without a vote since that text was first tabled in 2005.

By its terms, the Assembly would express its deep concern at the significant deterioration of the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, expressing its very serious concern at reports of systematic and grave violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural

rights, including torture, prison camps, limits on the freedom of movement, and sanctions imposed on citizens who had been repatriated from abroad. The Government would be strongly urged to protect inhabitants, address impunity, tackle the root causes of refugee outflows, and extend full cooperation to the Special Rapporteur.

Before action, the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said his Government totally rejected the draft, which was no more than a political prop pushed by the United States and others.

The draft resolution on the human rights situation in Iran — approved by a recorded vote of 83 in favour to 31 against, with 68 abstentions — would have the Assembly express deep concern at serious human rights violations relating to torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the “alarming” high frequency of the use of the death penalty in the absence of internationally recognized safeguards, and failure to abolish the execution of minors and persons who were under the age of 18 at the time of their offence. It would strongly urge Iran to ensure free, fair, transparent and inclusive presidential elections in 2013, calling on it to respect its human rights obligations, in law and in practice.

Before action on that text, Iran's delegate said the text's drafters appeared to disregard their criteria of denouncing the duplication of work in United Nations human rights mechanisms. Iran had taken part in the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review.

Two other draft resolutions were approved today by a recorded vote. The draft resolution on “The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination”, introduced by Egypt's representative, was approved by recorded vote of 173 in favour to 6 against (Canada, Federated States of Micronesia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Nauru and United States), with 3 abstentions (Cameroon, Honduras and South Sudan).

By its terms, the Assembly would stress the need for respect for and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and reaffirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine. It would urge all States and United Nations specialized agencies and organizations to continue to support Palestinians in the early realization of their right to self-determination.

The draft entitled “Towards a comprehensive and integral international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons”, introduced by El Salvador's delegate, was approved as orally revised by a recorded vote of 53 in favour to 3 against (Canada, Somalia and United States), with 109 abstentions.

Other draft resolutions approved by consensus today were entitled: “Realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond”; “Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women”; and “Trafficking in women and girls”.

Cyprus's delegate, on behalf of the European Union and Japan, introduced the draft on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Speaking during action on that text were the representatives of Cuba (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), Democratic People's Republic of Korea, China, Japan, Russian Federation, Nigeria, Nicaragua, Syria, Venezuela, Iran, Canada, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Singapore, Brazil, Ecuador and Bolivia.

The draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Iran was introduced by the representative of Canada. Speaking during action on that text were the representatives of Uruguay, Kazakhstan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, Syria, Ecuador, Belarus, Bolivia, Indonesia, Brazil, Somalia, China, Japan and Niger.

The draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Syria was introduced by the representative of Qatar. Speaking during action on that draft were the representatives of Syria, Nigeria, South Africa, Venezuela, Iran, Pakistan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Turkey, Belarus, Israel, Cuba, Ecuador, Jamaica, Brazil, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

The representative of the Philippines, also on behalf of the United Republic of Tanzania, introduced the text entitled, “Realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond”.

Speaking during action on the draft entitled “Towards a comprehensive and integral international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons” were the

representatives of Switzerland, United States, Cyprus (on behalf of the European Union), India, Singapore, Pakistan, Argentina and China.

The draft resolution on "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women" was introduced by the representative of France, also on behalf of the Netherlands. Speaking during action on that text were the representatives of Sudan (on behalf of the Arab Group), Chile, Pakistan, United States, Russian Federation and Venezuela. An observer for the Holy See also spoke.

The draft resolution on "Trafficking in women and girls" was introduced by the representative of the Philippines.

Also speaking during action on the draft entitled "The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination" were the representatives Argentina and Brazil.

Speaking in exercise of the right of reply were the representatives of the United Kingdom and Argentina.

The Committee will reconvene at 10 a.m. Wednesday, 28 November, to take action all outstanding draft resolutions.

Background

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) met today to take action on 12 draft resolutions, including country specific texts on: the Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (document [A/C.3/67/L.50](#)); the Situation of human rights in Iran (document [A/C.3/67/L.51](#)); and the Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (document [A/C.3/67/L.52](#)).

It was also expected to take action on resolutions entitled: Realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond (document [A/C.3/67/L.10/Rev.1](#)); Towards a comprehensive and integral international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons (document [A/C.3/67/L.9/Rev.1](#)); Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (document [A/C.3/67/L.19/Rev.1](#)); Trafficking in women and girls (document [A/C.3/67/L.20/Rev.1](#)); The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (document [A/C.3/67/L.54](#)); The United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab region (document [A/C.3/67/L.27/Rev.1](#)); Human rights and extreme poverty [A/C.3/67/L.32/Rev.1](#)); Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights (document [A/C.3/67/L.33](#)); and Freedom of religion or belief (document [A/C.3/67/L.48](#)).

Action on Drafts

Cuba's delegate, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, took the floor to relate the Movement's position on draft resolutions L.50, L.51 and L.52, reiterating its firm position expressed in May and August 2012 concerning human rights situations. At the Movement's sixty-sixth summit, held in Iran in August 2012, the Declaration adopted stressed the role and responsibility of the Human Rights Council in considering human rights in all countries. Heads of State and Government had stated their profound concern at the selective adoption of resolutions concerning countries, which breached the principles of non-selectivity and undermined international cooperation in protecting human rights.

She said the Movement believed the Universal Periodic Review was the main mechanism for considering such rights. The Review should be based on reliable information with the full participation of countries being reviewed in a non-partial and non-politicized manner. The drafts were based on assertions that did not provide a real basis for judging the situations in those countries. For such reasons, the Movement urged all States to reject them.

Cyprus' delegate, on behalf of the European Union and Japan, introduced the draft resolution on the Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (document [A/C.3/67/L.50](#)), saying the grave and systematic violations of a wide range of human rights persisted in that country. Those abuses had been well-documented in the Secretary-General's report. There had been a general deterioration in the human rights situation, he said, citing the absence of due process and the rule of law, collective punishment, extensive use of forced labour, the situation of asylum seekers and sanctions imposed on citizens who had been repatriated. He also expressed concern about the large number of prison camps where torture was widespread.

He said the text reiterated calls by the Assembly and the Human Rights Council for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to engage in technical cooperation activities and implement the recommendations of the outcome report of the 2009 Universal Periodic Review. The country also had

been called on to implement more effective food security policies. He regretted that, despite repeated appeals, the Government refused to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur. The text called on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to recognize his mandate and to cooperate with him. His delegation would have preferred to have engaged in a negotiation process with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but that country had refused. He hoped the text would be adopted with the broadest support.

Before action, the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said his Government totally rejected the draft, which was no more than a political prop pushed by the United States and others, which aimed to undermine his country's system. Human rights violations, as mentioned in the text, could not exist in institutional terms. The United States' North Korea Human Rights Act was a strategic tool to be used against his country. Efforts to interfere in internal affairs and depose people from the Government constituted "political terrorism".

Since the adoption of the first draft resolution in 2005, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had warned against such moves and advised the European Union to withdraw the texts. Questions might be raised about what Western countries might gain through such initiatives. All the facts showed that the resolution aimed at regime change.

China's delegate regretted that the text had been submitted, as her country had always opposed imposing pressure through country-specific texts and interference in States' internal affairs. In recent years, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had tried to improve the lives of its people and the international community should respect their right to choose their development path. She urged certain countries not to submit such texts on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the Third Committee and instead to focus on things conducive to that country's development.

Cuba's delegate opposed all country-specific resolutions aimed at countries of the global South. Such politicization had led to the disappearance of the Commission on Human Rights. However, the Universal Periodic Review offered an examination of such questions on a constructive basis. Genuine cooperation based on non-selectivity was the appropriate way to effect human rights for all.

Japan's delegate said the United Nations had consistently expressed grave concern over the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Human rights issues should be addressed through constructive dialogue, but it was still necessary, through the adoption of such texts, to urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to improve its situation. As the Special Rapporteur had noted, that country had not accepted any of the 167 recommendations of the 2009 Universal Periodic Review and he was deeply concerned about the country's overall refusal to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur. He was gravely disappointed by its refusal to cooperate with United Nations human rights mechanisms.

On the issue of abductions, he said that of the 17 Japanese students identified by his Government as abduction victims, 12 had not yet returned to their motherland. There were other cases in which abduction could not be ruled out. In line with the Pyongyang Declaration, Japan would continue to seek resolution of outstanding issues, including the abduction issue, and called on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to assist in that regard. He urged all delegates to support today's text, and on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to respond to the concerns expressed by the international community.

The representative of the Russian Federation said his Government had consistently been against one-sided and biased resolutions, as they did not promote resolution of human rights issues. The highest responsibility lay with States themselves, while the international community was called on to render technical assistance. There were appropriate negotiating forums to discuss such issues. It was in the Universal Periodic Review where discussions should be taking place.

Nigeria's delegate said the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be engaged with on the basis of respect for its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Selectivity should have no place vis-à-vis human rights questions. Nigeria would abstain in the vote. However, she appreciated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Human Rights Council.

She said that family reunions were best resolved through bilateral levels, calling on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to consider, on humanitarian grounds, provision of information on persons deemed missing or separated from their families in Japan over the last three decades. She

called on it to cooperate with the Human Rights Council to address humanitarian and human rights questions.

Nicaragua's delegate, on the three resolutions mentioned by Cuba's delegate being considered today, rejected once again the practice of selectivity on human rights. The best way to deal with human rights questions was in the Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review.

Syria's delegate expressed regret over the insistence of proposing drafts on human rights situations for political reasons, as that threatened the political and legal terms of reference for international relations. It undermined the consensus achieved on the proper mechanisms for dealing with human rights issues. He reaffirmed Syria's rejection of using human rights issues in a selective manner to reach goals that interfered in internal State affairs. That contravened the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulated the concept of sovereign equality of all Member States. He opposed such initiatives, as they created double standards for how the international community dealt with human rights issues. Those questions must be addressed in the Human Rights Council.

Venezuela's delegate opposed draft resolutions directed at one State, which violated the principles of non-interference and self-determination of peoples. The Universal Periodic Review offered objectivity on human rights situations in any part of the world and she deplored the application of double standards with respect to human rights. She favoured dialogue among parties without conditions.

Iran's delegate opposed the draft resolution, saying that the proliferation of country-specific texts breached the principles of impartiality and non-selectivity in addressing human rights issues. The Universal Periodic Review was the main mechanism to address such questions.

The Committee then approved by consensus the draft resolution on the Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (document A/C.3/67/L.50).

The text would have the Assembly express its deep concern at the significant deterioration of the human rights situation in that country despite the succession of leadership. It would express its very serious concern at the persistence of reports of systematic and grave violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including torture, prison camps, limits on the freedom of movement in the country, as well as sanctions imposed on citizens who had been repatriated from abroad.

By other terms, the Assembly would underscore its very serious concern at questions relating to abductions in the form of enforced disappearance, calling on the Government to urgently resolve them, including through existing channels, and in a transparent manner. It would express its very deep concern at the precarious humanitarian situation, compounded by increased State restrictions on the cultivation and trade in foodstuffs. It would strongly urge the Government to cooperate with international donors, in accordance with international standards, and more broadly, to end systematic human rights violations by implementing the measures set out in General Assembly resolutions.

By final terms, the Government would be strongly urged to protect its inhabitants, address the issue of impunity, tackle the root causes of refugee outflows, prosecute those exploiting refugees, and extend full cooperation to the Special Rapporteur, including by granting him full and free access to the country. It would be strongly urged to engage in technical cooperation activities in the field of human rights with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), cooperate with the International Labour Organization (ILO), and reinforce its cooperation with United Nations humanitarian agencies.

After action, the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea strongly rejected the resolution. "There are no human rights violations in my country," he said. His Government had been consistent in its position about solving issues through dialogue and could not accept such a confrontational approach. The text's adoption could not be associated with consensus. Western countries had tried to justify their political plot by picking on human rights issues in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

He said Japan had been the most shameless, as it had systematically perpetrated grave crimes against his country. Every family in his country had been affected by those crimes, including 200,000 women forced into sexual slavery. Japan had avoided taking responsibility for such acts. Japan should understand that life in other countries was as important as in its own. He thanked countries that had expressed solidarity with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Canada's delegate was profoundly concerned about systematic and grave human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including the disregard for the freedoms of religion and expression, as well as the cruel and "despicable" treatment of prisoners, including through public executions. Human rights were essential to the protection of human dignity. The passing of Kim

Jong Il had presented an opportunity to free people from six decades of isolation, but the world had yet to see positive change. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea must close its camps and abide by its human rights obligations. Canada would continue to express its abhorrence at the human rights violations occurring in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic said addressing human rights should be based on respect, dialogue and the avoidance of selectivity and politicization. His country would not stand against consensus on the draft resolution, but that should not be understood as support for country-specific resolutions.

Singapore's delegate said his Government was against country-specific resolutions. He had gone along with consensus, but that should not be regarded as taking a position on the country concerned. He called on States to protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Brazil's delegate welcomed that the text referred to cooperation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and United Nations agencies. He encouraged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to assess its needs in the field of international cooperation, recommending that it also engage in actions aimed at realizing the human right to adequate food, with its support for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF, among others. Brazil stood ready to share its experience in soy production, among other things. The struggle against poverty and hunger was a goal all should pursue regardless of regional and other differences.

China's delegate supported the remarks made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and did not join the consensus on the draft.

Ecuador's delegate said the text did not help improve human rights in the country involved. He reaffirmed that the Universal Periodic Review was not being fully used. Ecuador had joined consensus on the text, but would have abstained if there had been a vote.

Bolivia's delegate said only international cooperation based on non-selectivity could advance human rights. The Universal Periodic Review was the appropriate forum for today's discussion.

Cuba's delegate could not join the consensus and disassociated Cuba from the text.

Venezuela's delegate said her Government disassociated itself from consensus on the draft resolution.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea rejected remarks made by Canada's delegate, who had insulted his country's supreme authority by mentioning the name of Kim Jong Il, who was a symbol of his country.

The Committee then turned to the draft resolution on the Situation of human rights in Iran (document A/C.3/67/L.51), which was introduced by the representative of Canada. He said that widespread and systematic violations had continued in Iran since the resolution was last taken up. Given Iran's disregard for human rights, the situation warranted the continued attention of the Assembly. The Government's treatment of its people "effectively make it one of the worst human rights violators in the world". Every effort had been made to ensure an accurate and objective text, he said.

Speaking before action, Uruguay's representative said his delegation would abstain from the vote. His delegation believed Iran's Government had not taken steps to ensure its citizens enjoyed their full human rights. Nevertheless, there had been progress in some parts of the country, and his delegation favoured dialogue.

Kazakhstan's representative, speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, expressed opposition to the practice of submitting country-specific resolutions on human rights, targeting developing countries. The Conference believed submission of such country-specific resolutions politicized human rights. Iran had fully cooperated with the Universal Periodic Review and invited the High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit. Despite Iran's cooperation and positive developments, the draft resolution was submitted in a selective manner. He urged all States to vote against the resolution.

The representative of Democratic People's Republic of Korea said his delegation joined others in disagreeing with the resolution. Western countries had over the years been putting forward the resolution and interfering in Iran's internal affairs. It was purely a politically motivated resolution and had nothing to do with genuine human rights. Human rights could not be imposed from the outside. His delegation would vote against the resolution.

Iran's representative said the Iranian people had not chosen the Canadian delegate to speak for them. They had used their own voice for 30 years, he said, suggesting the delegate should speak only for his own people. It was evident that Canada brought a bilateral case of a judicial nature to the Assembly with the view to abusing human rights mechanisms to advance its self-centred political interests. Insisting on tabling the procedurally and substantively flawed resolution, which would only satisfy the short-sighted political interests of a few countries, undermined the imperatives of the United Nations human rights machinery. It was out of touch with the realities of Iranian society because it relied on websites and partial media as its main source of information. Selective country-specific resolutions would reduce noble human rights concerns to manipulative devices of political rivalry.

Iran had long supported the establishment of human rights mechanisms to provide scrutiny of all Member States on the basis of equality, fairness and universality. To fully cooperate with the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, a very high ranking Iranian delegation had taken part in the Human Rights Council working group to present its report. "Providing a comprehensive record of measures taken at a national level, we cooperated and actively participated in the deliberations on the report and explained in detail our human rights policies and practices," he said. "It seems, when it comes to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the drafters of the resolution purposefully disregard even their advocated criteria, denouncing duplication, parallelism and redundancy of the work in the United Nations human rights mechanisms." In order to preserve the dignity and credibility of those mechanisms, he hoped Members of the Committee would take his statement into consideration. He requested a recorded vote.

Explanation of Vote before the Vote

Venezuela's representative said her country opposed individual and selective condemnation of single States. Sponsors of the current draft resolution had violated human rights themselves, showing selectivity and double standards. Dialogue, mutual respect and cooperation that observed the Charter should constitute the essential instrument for promotion and protection of human rights. Her delegation would vote against this resolution, and urged other States not to use human rights as a tool for political pressure.

Cuba's representative opposed country-specific resolutions. The text was an initiative that purely came from political motivations and for that reason Cuba would vote against it.

Syria's representative said his country's principled position was to reject intervening in the internal affairs of any other State under the pretext of human rights. The concept of human rights demanded a consensual approach through the Human Rights Council in Geneva. His country would vote against the draft resolution.

Ecuador's representative said his country fully supported the work of the Human Rights Council as the body to address human rights with impartiality and non-selectivity without political considerations. His country rejected the continued chorus of finger pointing at specific countries and would vote against the draft resolution.

The representative of Belarus said draft resolutions such as the one before the Committee could not promote dialogue on support for human rights. The draft resolution was not objective, and ignored official sources of information and specific actions. The attempts to impose views and assessments on Iran were not promising. Belarus would vote against the draft resolution and would continue to maintain that position in the future.

Bolivia's representative said her Government firmly supported the principles of non-interference and sovereignty and would therefore vote against the draft resolution.

By a recorded vote of 83 in favour to 31 against, with 68 abstentions, the Committee approved the draft resolution on the Situation of human rights in Iran (document A/C.3/67/L.51).

The text would have the Assembly express deep concern at serious ongoing and recurring human rights violations in Iran relating to torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including flogging and amputations; the "alarming" high frequency of the carrying-out of the death penalty in the absence of internationally recognized safeguards; the failure to abolish the execution of minors and persons who at the time of their offence were under the age of 18; and the practice of suspension strangulation as a method of execution, among other things.

By other terms, the Assembly would strongly urge Iran to ensure free, fair, transparent and inclusive presidential elections in 2013 that reflect the will of the people. It would call on Iran to respect fully its human rights obligations, in law and in practice, especially in eliminating amputations, flogging, blinding and other forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;

revisiting the revised Islamic penal code to make it consistent with its obligation under article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; abolishing the use of stoning and suspension strangulation as methods of execution; and eliminating all forms of discrimination and other human rights violations against women and girls.

It also would strongly encourage the thematic special procedures mandate holders to pay particular attention to, with a view to investigating and reporting on, the human rights situation in Iran. The Secretary-General would be requested to report to the Assembly's sixty-eighth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

Speaking in explanation of vote after vote, Indonesia's representative expressed full support of the collective efforts to promote human rights, however, such efforts must be based on mutual dialogue and cooperation. The absence of negotiation on the current resolution caused Indonesia to abstain from the vote.

Brazil's representative said his delegation abstained from the vote, but it was concerned by the matter at hand. The inclusion in the resolution of challenges that were not mentioned in the reports of the Special Rapporteur and Secretary-General, as well as omission of positive aspects, such as Iran's participation in treaty bodies, made for an unbalanced text. A more objective and balanced approach would confer greater legitimacy on the text. Brazil encouraged Iran to use the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review as a basis to strengthen its position in the field of human rights.

Somalia's representative said the resolution was flawed and unacceptable to his Government and it had voted against it.

China's representative said, based on its consistent opposition to country-specific resolutions, her delegation had voted against the resolution.

Japan's representative said his delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution on the grounds that many improvements on human rights were needed in Iran. On the other hand, Japan had held a dialogue with Iran in September and Iran had responded positively to human rights treaty bodies. He encouraged Iran to implement the 123 recommendations of the Human Rights Council from 2010.

Niger's representative said his delegation abstained from the vote because it was opposed to resolutions aimed at particular States on an individual basis.

Next, the Committee turned to the draft resolution on the Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (document A/C.3/67/L.52), which was introduced by the representative of Qatar. He said the flagrant human rights situation in Syria was a serious concern, noting Syria's policies of oppression and violation of the right to life, among other things. It required a firm response by the Assembly that was commensurate with the situation in Syria. Regional implications were compounded by crimes against humanity.

He said violations required condemnation irrespective of the source or pretext. Violations by certain battalions of the opposition could not be compared to the heinous massacres by a Government that claimed to be legitimate and which had a huge military arsenal. The text would send a message to the brave Syrian people that the international community refused to accept such injustices.

Before action, Syria's delegate said some delegations were exploiting the Third Committee to impose their political objectives of interference and contravening the Charter and international humanitarian law. Three Arab delegations had sponsored the text. Having seen Western delegations submit a similar draft resolution, he believed Arab countries had become a negative tool threatening common Arab action at the service of Western plans to interfere. The worst was that those Arab States had rendered service to Israeli aggression against Gaza. "There is no more Arab League", he said, but rather a divisive tool by Gulf petrodollar countries that suffered from political, ethical and financial bankruptcy. Why had they shown no enthusiasm with regard to the Arab Spring in Palestine? Was it because they had become sheep? They had become wolves with respect to Syria.

Noting that Qatar had submitted the draft resolution also on behalf of Saudi Arabia and Morocco, he said that last week, Morocco had said it was seeking a Syria that was based on non-discrimination, democracy and the rule of law. "We agree to that", he said, reassuring delegates that Syria was committed to attaining those objectives. Syrians hoped to create a democracy that was a result of "the Syrian experience"; not one based on religion or petrodollars and imposed by foreigners through armed violence.

He went on to say that the draft resolution justified massacres perpetrated against the Syrian people. He asked whether there was a legitimate terrorism being perpetrated against the Syrian people. Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, among others, were perpetrators, while France and "Great Britain" were sponsors. He regretted that some countries of the Arab League or the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) had imposed sanctions that threatened Syrians' human rights, defying their principled position condemning such measures.

He said the draft resolution did not show any good intentions. It overlooked transparency and human rights, holding his Government responsible for everything that happened in his country without any accountability for the armed terrorist groups. It did not call for national dialogue to resolve the crisis, in line with the principles of peaceful dispute settlement, the Six Point Plan or the Geneva Declaration. He urged comprehensive national reform of political, economic and social life, adding that such reforms would not be achieved through political resolutions to exploit countries from United Nations rostrums. Certain countries should cease financing and harbouring armed terrorist groups and sending them to Syria through neighbours, in particular, Turkey. He asked whether the commitment to Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity outlined in preambular paragraph 7 was in line with the interference perpetrated by Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. He requested a recorded vote, urging all States to vote against the text.

Making a general statement, Nigeria's representative said it was clearly understood that in the new Human Rights Council, Member States would refrain from naming and shaming. It was her delegation's opinion that such actions should be done with impartiality, not as punitive measures or to score political points. They should be invoked sparingly on a case by case basis and not detract in any way from cherished principles of sovereignty. In the case of Syria, where two or more parties were taking part in a conflict, only one side was being named. Peace would continue to prove elusive without a political solution by the people in Syria themselves, free of political pressure. She called upon Syrians to work constructively with the Arab League and the joint special representative.

Speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, Venezuela's representative said her delegation would vote against the draft resolution, since it rejected the practice of targeting certain Member States under the guise of human rights. It was concerned about the loss of innocent lives in Syria and elsewhere, but the text before the Committee ran against international law, impartiality and non-politicization of human rights. Any measure or action that could be taken by the United Nations must have true cooperation, with respect for sovereignty.

Iran's representative said his delegation was firmly of the view that the practice of country-specific resolutions was being exploited for political ends, breaching the principles of non-selectivity and impartiality in protecting human rights. The Universal Periodic Review was the main intergovernmental mechanism to review human rights at a national level in all countries, without exceptions. Iran was voting against the draft resolution.

Pakistan's representative said his country remained deeply concerned at the spiralling violence in Syria. The deteriorating human rights situation in the country was also deeply distressing. Pakistan fully supported the efforts of the joint special representative. The six-point plan and final communiqué from the Geneva meeting provided a road map to peace, but Pakistan was concerned that both sides had chosen a path of violence. The resolution named only one side and would lead to a further hardening of attitudes, and would be unable to stimulate dialogue towards a solution. Pakistan was constrained to abstain in the vote.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said the draft resolution was the result of political considerations. The purpose was to undermine the political and social system of the Syrian people; his delegation could not accept that political tool, and would vote against the draft resolution.

By a recorded vote of 132 in favour to 12 against, with 35 abstentions, the Committee approved the draft resolution on the Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (document A/C.3/67/L.52).

By that text, the Assembly, expressing the urgent need to achieve a cessation of violence and prevent its further escalation and spread, would strongly condemn the continued widespread and systematic gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the Syrian authorities and the Government-controlled "shabbiha" militia, such as the use of heavy weapons, aerial bombardments and force against civilians, massacres, arbitrary executions, and extrajudicial killings, among other abuses.

The Assembly would call upon Syria to immediately end all human rights violations and attacks against civilians, protect its population and fully comply with its international law obligations. It would call upon all parties to end all forms of violence, also stressing its support for the aspirations of the

Syrian people for a peaceful, democratic and pluralistic society, in which there was no room for sectarianism or discrimination on ethnic, religious, linguistic or any other grounds, based on the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

By other terms, the Assembly would welcome the report of the independent international commission of inquiry on Syria and its recommendations, but would regret Syria's non-cooperation with that commission. It would demand that Syria provide the commission and individuals working on its behalf immediate, full and unfettered entry and access to all areas of Syria. It would also demand that all parties cooperate fully with the commission.

The Assembly would also express grave concern at the increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of the ongoing violence, and reiterate its appreciation of the significant efforts made by neighbouring countries and countries of the region to assist those who had fled across Syrian borders. It would urge all relevant United Nations agencies, especially the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to provide urgent and coordinated support to Syrian refugees and their host countries.

Speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, Turkey's representative said, as a neighbouring country, it had always supported the safety and security of Syria. Turkey would stand by the Syrian people and had voted in favour of this resolution in that spirit.

The representative of Belarus said her country had always been opposed to country-specific resolutions; this text was one-sided and did not reflect the conflict. The resolution today would hardly end the conflict, and Belarus voted against it.

Israel's representative said hundreds of thousands of Syrians had fled their homes because of Bashar al Assad's brutal regime, and now faced winter. The human rights violations occurring every day in Syria challenged stability for that country and the rest of the region.

Cuba's representative said his country remained abreast of the situation in Syria and was concerned with the loss of lives of innocent people anywhere in the world. Cuba condemned terrorist attacks against Syrian people. The international community must support any effort for peace and security in Syria, but Cuba rejected country-specific solutions, which had nothing to do with human rights. Cooperation at an international level was the only way to protect human rights, and Cuba believed the text did not do that, so had voted against it.

Ecuador's representative said his country condemned human rights violations in Syria. It could not support impunity or the arming of terrorist groups; it was concerned by the language of the resolution, which polarized the situation without respect for sovereignty and independence. A draft resolution of such nature contributed only to politicizing the matter and did not help the people of Syria. For that reason, Ecuador had abstained.

Jamaica's representative said his country categorically condemned violations of human rights, whenever or wherever they occurred. The Government of Syria had the primary responsibility for protecting the people of the country. Jamaica had voted for the draft resolution, even though it had serious concerns about balance in the text. The text did not give true weight to the human rights dimension of the conflict. His delegation would like to have seen a paragraph appealing to all sides to cease hostilities and enter negotiations to end the conflict. Jamaica did not condone or support any advocacy of regime change that may be implied in the document.

Syria's representative thanked all the delegations that voted against the draft resolution. That was clear testimony that many Member States were aware of what was going on in Syria. "We in Syria are aware of the crisis unfolding. This is something that we don't deny. However, what we do deny is the claims by others that they have the right to give us lessons and preach to us on the promotion and protection of human rights in Syria, instead of providing real assistance," he said. The motivations of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution were political, with the aim of naming and shaming the Syrian Government and increasing the suffering of its people at the hands of terrorists funded by the co-sponsors. Syria suffered from transnational terrorism funded by Gulf petrodollars, trained and facilitated by Turkey and politically supported by European countries. That would backfire on all the co-sponsors who train terrorists; terrorism had no religion.

Syria was keen to maintain the special cultural relations it had with the Turkish people, he said, but it categorically rejected the intervention of the Government of Turkey into its internal affairs, which would set ablaze all the countries in the region. "The genie, when it is set out of the bottle, will not return to the bottle," he said. In response to Israel's representative, he said historians, including Israeli historians, had registered that all leaders of the Zionist entity had been leaders of terrorist groups.

Some of them were even wanted by the British leaders in Palestine. The region needed peace. Israel rejected peace, undermining the desire of the Palestinian people.

Brazil's representative said his country had voted in favour of the draft resolution, and called for an end to all forms of violence in Syria. There would be no resolution to the conflict through military means. Brazil regretted the lack of results thus far and called on Syria to follow all relevant Human Rights Council resolutions. The international community must genuinely support, by both words and acts, the cessation of violence and respect for rights. No legitimate purpose could be achieved through increased militarization of the conflict. Brazil was home to a large community of Syrian descendents, and supported a solution to the crisis that respected the will of the Syrian people.

Making a general statement, Switzerland's representative said her country was concerned about the situation in Syria and was happy that the draft resolution had been approved with broad support. But, Switzerland would have preferred that the text call for referring the matter to the International Criminal Court, which was the most appropriate forum for dealing with such crimes.

Liechtenstein's representative said the crisis in Syria warranted the attention of the international community, and his country had joined the draft resolution to convey such urgency. But, given the nature of the conflict, the resolution should have made reference to respect for humanitarian law and the Geneva Convention. Liechtenstein hoped that any resolution in the future would be the result of a transparent and open discussion, he said.

The Committee turned to the text entitled Realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond (document A/C.3/67/L.10/Rev.1), which was introduced by the representative of the Philippines, also on behalf of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The secretariat representative said the request for documentation in the text would create an additional cost of \$50,900 for documentation services in 2013. No provision had been included in the 2012-2013 biennium, and, as such, an additional allocation would be required. All efforts would be made to absorb that amount within the existing budget.

The representative of the Philippines said the General Assembly would hold a high-level meeting on disability and development on 23 September 2013, aiming to achieve the objective of full and equal participation of disabled persons in society. The text offered a possible contribution to preparations for that meeting. It requested the United Nations to facilitate technical assistance within existing resources, update methodologies for disabilities data collection, and regularly include such data in United Nations publications on economic and social development. She hoped the Committee would approve it by consensus.

She then made an oral amendment to paragraph 9 (b), including the phrase "within existing resources".

The Committee approved without a vote, as orally revised, the draft resolution entitled Realizing the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond.

By the text, the Assembly, expressing grave concern that disabled persons continued to be subject to multiple and aggravated forms of discrimination and were still largely invisible in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals, would welcome the holding of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on 23 September 2013 with the theme "The way forward: a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond".

It would also urge Member States, international and regional organizations, and financial institutions to make a concerted effort to include persons with disabilities and integrate the principles of accessibility and inclusion in the monitoring of the Development Goals. Further, it would request the United Nations to facilitate technical assistance, within existing resources, for the collection of national and regional statistics on disability, and request the Secretary-General to analyse, publish and disseminate disability data and statistics in future periodic reports.

Next, the Committee turned to the draft resolution entitled Towards a comprehensive and integral international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons (document A/C.3/67/L.9/Rev.1), which was introduced by the representative of El Salvador. He said by 2050 over 20 per cent of the world's population would be over 60 years old, and that would be more apparent in developing countries. Gaps and continued discrimination based on age still needed to be addressed; many appeals had been made to promptly strengthen protection measures for older persons. He made oral revisions to the text.

A recorded vote was requested.

El Salvador's representative asked which delegation had requested a recorded vote.

The Chair said the United States had requested the recorded vote.

Speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, Switzerland's representative, also speaking on behalf of Norway, said the two countries had always attached great importance to the well-being of older persons. However, they remained unconvinced of the need to establish a new regulatory framework for the protection and promotion of their rights at this stage. They did not believe a new international legal instrument would fill regulatory gaps; rather than create something new, the international community should make better use of what already existed, he said. Current human rights instruments did not leave gaps in the protection of older persons. A number of alternative proposals had been made which should have been explored further, but the main sponsor of the resolution regrettably was unable to take into account Norway and Switzerland's recommendations. Thus, they were unable to support the draft resolution and would abstain from the vote.

The representative of the United States said one of her country's domestic policies was to focus attention and resources on the unique needs of older persons. The draft resolution would give the open-ended working group a mandate for considering proposals for an international legal framework. It did not take into account considerable discussion at earlier sessions in 2011 and 2012, which did not reach consensus. Older persons suffered numerous abuses, and there were actions that could be taken in the short term with existing instruments for the protection and promotion of their rights. Scarce resources would be better used for implementing existing instruments. Considering budget constraints, more reflection was needed to decide on a course of action. The United States would be voting against the resolution and urged other Member States to do the same in order to avoid sending conflicting messages on the promotion and protection of older persons' rights.

The representative of Cyprus, on behalf of the European Union, said its Member States had constructively engaged in all three sessions of the open-ended working group, as well as the Group of 77's efforts on ageing. The European Union appreciated El Salvador's efforts, but did not share the view that a new convention was the way forward. Rather, efforts should be concentrated on more effective implementation of existing standards and better use of existing mechanisms. The European Union did not believe El Salvador's assertion that the open-ended working group's mandate would remain unchanged by the text; it would be modified and expanded to consider an international legal instrument. More time was needed to discuss the proposal at hand. The Union deeply regretted that its proposals and concerns had not been reflected in the current text. It would abstain on the vote and respectfully asked other delegations to do the same, he said.

By a recorded vote of 53 in favour to 3 against (Canada, Somalia, United States), with 109 abstentions, the Committee approved the draft resolution entitled Towards a comprehensive and integral international legal instrument to promote and protect the rights and dignity of older persons (document A/C.3/67/L.9/Rev.1).

By that text, the Assembly would decide that the open-ended working group on ageing shall, as part of its mandate starting from its fourth session, to be held in 2013, consider proposals for such an instrument, based on the holistic approach in the fields of social development, human rights and non-discrimination, as well as gender equality. It would request the working group to present a proposal with the main elements that such an instrument should include, which were not currently addressed by existing mechanisms, inviting relevant bodies to contribute to that effect.

By other terms, the Secretary-General, with the support of the OHCHR, among others, would be requested to submit to the working group, by its fourth session, existing international legal instruments, documents and programmes addressing the situation of older persons. He would also be requested to include in his report to the Assembly's sixty-eighth session information on the implementation of the present resolution.

India's representative said it felt the current resolution presupposed the outcome of discussions within the framework of the open-ended working group. Once the review process was complete, India looked forward to talks on the matter.

Japan's representative said his delegation abstained from the vote. The draft resolution portended to a future legal instrument without sufficient discussions by Member States, he said.

Singapore's representative said her country had put in place many strategies and programmes to do more for the elderly and had voted in favour of the resolution. However, it noted concern over negotiations on the text. She looked forward to constructive dialogue to develop such an instrument by consensus.

Pakistan's representative said his country had expected to discuss different facets of protection of older persons in a constructive manner. The draft resolution was trying to expedite the process without bringing all delegations on board. Pakistan had abstained on the text, he said.

Argentina's representative said his country had voted in favour of the draft resolution, but it had not been recorded.

China's representative said his country attached importance to the question of ageing worldwide and commended El Salvador for its efforts and flexibility in negotiations. All countries should attach importance to the second review of the Plan of Action. On developing an international instrument for older persons, all countries should support the mandate of the open-ended working group.

Continuing, the Committee turned to the draft resolution on the Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (document A/C.3/67/L.19/Rev.1), which was introduced by the representative of France, also on behalf of the Netherlands. He made a few oral amendments to the text, saying that it reflected the contributions of all delegations wishing to contribute. The text provided a framework for combating violence against women. He hoped it would be adopted by consensus, as had been the case up to this point.

Before action, the representative of Sudan, on behalf of the Arab Group, said his delegation had joined consensus on the text from a belief that the issue concerned the whole world. The Arab Group had participated in negotiations since the beginning and many of its proposals had been taken into consideration. The balanced text covered most delegations' concerns. Many Arab Group States had taken steps to address violence against women, including through the reinforcement of common Committee work on that issue. The Arab Group's strategy to protect women against violence, especially in armed conflict, aimed at building a culture of peace.

The Committee then approved, as orally revised, the draft resolution on the Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

By the text, the Assembly would stress that "violence against women" meant any act of gender-based violence that resulted in or was likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women. It would strongly condemn all violence against women and girls, whether perpetrated or condoned by the State, private persons or non-State actors, stressing that States strongly condemn all such abuse and refrain from invoking any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination.

By other terms, the Assembly would urge States to translate their national strategy into programmes and actions, and take a more systematic approach aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women by, for example, establishing an integrated national plan to combat such abuse. The inter-agency Programme Appraisal Committee of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women would be called on to continue providing guidance on the implementation of the 2010-2015 strategy for the Trust Fund.

More broadly, the Assembly would call on all United Nations bodies, entities, funds and programmes, and invite the Bretton Woods institutions to better coordinate their work through the use of joint programming prepared by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Violence against Women. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences would be requested to present an annual report at the Assembly's sixty-eighth and sixty-ninth sessions. The Secretary-General would be requested to present an oral report to the Commission on the status of women at its fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth sessions.

After action, Chile's delegate described the ways in which his Government had made progress in eliminating violence against women. Chile would have liked to have co-sponsored the draft, however, that had not been possible, as reproductive rights had been included, an issue on which consensus had not been achieved. In Chile, life was constitutionally protected from conception.

Pakistan's delegate said his Government was satisfied with the terms of the resolution. He reiterated that controversial references that created divisions among delegations should be avoided, including issues not directly linked to the text.

The representative of the United States strongly endorsed the text, saying that the strong link to sexual and reproductive health and rights was critical to efforts to address violence against women. She appreciated that the draft resolution recognized the importance of States complying with their International Conference on Population and Development commitments. It was critical to promote and protect the reproductive rights of women and young people, including for them to make decisions free from discrimination, coercion and violence.

The representative of the Russian Federation attached great importance to combating violence against women, and, as such, joined consensus on the draft. It believed all cultures had the same basic values. Certain prejudices should be condemned and counteracted, as they discriminated against women. For example, the Russian Federation had made clear its position on difference between harmful practices, and traditions and customs. The Russian Federation had concern about the use of the term "harmful customary practices". A clear distinction should be made between traditions, on the one hand, and prejudice and harmful practice, on the other. She reminded the co-sponsors of their responsibility to reflect the views of all countries in draft resolutions.

Venezuela's delegate had joined consensus on the text, saying that this year, however, her Government had withdrawn its co-sponsorship, due to the text's references to Security Council resolutions. It was a misuse of those resolutions to attempt to link them to those by the Human Rights Council.

A representative of the Holy See said that while the resolution contained commendable elements, he was duty bound to reaffirm his reservations on all references to sexual and reproductive health, and the controversial expression "reproductive rights". Those terms and references were never to be construed to include access to abortion. States were to uphold the rights and responsibilities of parents with regard to the upbringing and education of their children. The Holy See understood the term "gender" to refer to "male" and "female".

Next, the Committee turned to the draft resolution on Trafficking in women and girls (document A/C.3/67/L.20/Rev.1), which was introduced by the representative of the Philippines. Trafficking in persons was a heinous crime that knew no borders, she said, and right now, in almost every corner of the globe, men, women and children were being subjected to injustice. The draft resolution called on Governments to enhance preventative measures and ensure their accountability. Her delegation had exerted the utmost efforts to engage constructively with all delegations, and believed the draft text struck a balance towards consensus. It was its hope, as in previous years, that the Committee would approve this resolution by consensus.

The Committee approved the draft resolution by consensus.

That text would have the Assembly urge States that had not yet done so to consider ratifying or acceding to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The Assembly also would urge States, the United Nations and other international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society, to implement relevant provisions of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

By other terms, the Assembly would urge Governments to devise, enforce and strengthen gender and age-sensitive measures to eliminate all forms of trafficking in women and girls, including for sexual and economic exploitation, as part of a comprehensive anti-trafficking strategy that integrated a human rights perspective. It would also urge Governments to take all appropriate measures to ensure that victims of trafficking are not penalized or prosecuted for acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked.

Lastly, the Committee turned to the draft resolution on The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (document A/C.3/67/L.54), which was introduced by the representative of Egypt. The fact that 142 Member States had co-sponsored the draft resolution showed the respect for the right of the Palestinian people, he said. This right was not a gift to be bestowed on the Palestinian people. He hoped the text would be adopted by consensus.

A recorded vote was requested.

The representative of Egypt asked which delegation requested the recorded vote.

The Chair said that Israel had requested the vote.

Speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, Israel's representative said that history had shown that peace must be negotiated and could not be imposed from the outside. Only Israel and Palestine could create two states side by side next to each other in peace. Palestine was more than happy to travel the world and speak with leaders, but they did not speak with Israel. Israel had consistently been willing to recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination, but Palestine had not recognized Israel's right to live in peace. Hamas cared more for the destruction of Israel than the rights of the Palestinian people. It was much easier to travel the world bashing Israel than negotiating with it. Israel supported a two-State solution, but would vote against the resolution. The solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was not in New York; it lay in the Middle East.

By a recorded vote of 173 in favour to 6 against (Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, United States), with 3 abstentions (Cameroon, Honduras, South Sudan), the Committee approved the draft resolution The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (document A/C.3/67/L.54).

By that text, the Assembly would express the urgent need for the resumption and accelerated advancement of negotiations within the Middle East peace process, based on the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and for the speedy achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. Further, it would stress the need for respect for and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and would reaffirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine. It would urge all States, specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to continue to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination.

Speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, the representative of Argentina reaffirmed its recognition of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish an independent and viable State. That was why it voted in favour of the draft approved. In the question of the Malvinas Islands, there was no "people" subjugated, dominated or exploited by the illegal occupation by the United Kingdom of parts of the Argentine national territory, after it expelled the Argentine population and authorities established on the islands and replaced them with its own subjects. That made the right of self-determination inapplicable to the question of the Malvinas Islands, to which the other decolonization guiding principle applied: territorial integrity. General Assembly resolutions and the Special Committee on Decolonization stress that it was a "special and particular" decolonization situation, expressly recognizing that a sovereignty dispute existed between Argentina and the United Kingdom. They also established that the way to put an end to it was through the resumption of bilateral negotiations, in order to find as soon as possible a just, peaceful and definitive solution to the controversy, taking into account the "interests" of the population on the islands.

Brazil's representative said Israel had not shown a willingness to fulfil many of the decisions by the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian territories. Dialogue was the only way forward. Only respect of human rights and international humanitarian law by all parties could lead to enduring peace, he said.

The representative of the United Kingdom, speaking in right of reply, said her country had no doubt of its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and surrounding areas. There could be no negotiation on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless the residents so wished. They had expressed their opinions to the Decolonization Committee; no population had been removed from the islands when their families moved there generations ago.

Speaking in right of reply, Argentina's representative said the Malvinas, South Georgias and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were integral parts of the Argentine national territory and that, being illegitimately occupied by the United Kingdom, were subject to a sovereignty dispute between both countries which was recognized by several international organizations. Argentina regretted that the British Government sought to distort historical facts in attempting to conceal the act of usurpation it committed in 1833. Rather than trying to refute historical facts it already admitted occurred, the United Kingdom should immediately resume negotiations with Argentina on sovereignty over the Malvinas, South Georgias and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas in order to reach a just and definitive solution to the dispute.

Egypt's delegate asked if the right of reply could be exercised during the reading of the explanation of the vote.

The secretariat representative said the right of reply normally applied during general discussion, after the list of speakers was closed. The Committee was not now in general discussion. It was not time for the exercise of the right of reply.

The representative of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, in a general statement, expressed gratitude to the States that voted in favour of the text. The immense number of co-sponsors testified to the support for the historic right of Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination. It conveyed the message to Israel that its violations of international law must cease and that it was expected to comply with all its obligations. The text was not contrary to peace efforts, but, rather, complementary to it and absolutely necessary. The right to self-determination had never been among the permanent status issues.

She said that right was not up for negotiation. For that reason, Israel's negative vote sent a message that appeared to indicate that it rejected a peace settlement based on two states. The right to self-determination must be recognized by both parties. Palestinians had recognized Israel's right to exist in 1988. The time had come to hold Israel accountable to the Charter of the United Nations and to international law. The international community must uphold the rule of law. On Thursday, the General Assembly would vote on the status of Palestine, to change it to that of an observer state.

Afghanistan's delegate corrected her Government's vote on the draft resolution entitled, "Human rights and unilateral coercive measures", saying its vote was in favour, not an abstention.

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