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General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

95th plenary meeting
Monday, 28 August 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson . . . . . (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/71/764/Add.8)

The Acting President: Before proceeding, in keeping with the established practice, I would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/71/764/Add.8, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/71/764/Add.7, Libya has made the payments necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/71/764/Add.8?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 111

Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/71/300)

The Acting President: As members are aware, in accordance with the provisions of Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General is mandated to notify the General Assembly of matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal. In that connection, the General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/71/300.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of that document?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 111?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 28

Report of the Security Council

Report of the Security Council (A/71/2)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta, to introduce the report of the Security Council.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt), President of the Security Council: I would like to thank the President for organizing today's meeting. As President of the Security Council for the month of August, it is my honour to introduce the annual report of the Council

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

(A/71/2), which covers the period from 1 August 2015 to 31 December 2016.

I extend my thanks to the delegation of Japan, which, as President of the Security Council in July 2016, prepared the introduction of the report. Members of the Council also contributed to the preparation of the report. I also extend my thanks to the Secretariat for compiling the rest of the report, and to all those involved in producing it.

The present report incorporates changes mandated in the note by the President dated 10 December 2015 (S/2015/944). The decision took into account the views of the Member States expressed during the debate on the agenda item entitled "Report of the Security Council" at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly (see A/70/PV.51) and in the thematic debates of the Security Council on its working methods, as well as during the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. Thereafter, the period of coverage for all future reports shall be from 1 January to 31 December.

The Charter of the United Nations entrusts the Security Council with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council, with the support of the United Nations membership, has sought to actively discharge its responsibilities, while urging the peaceful resolution of conflicts and undertaking a series of peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities all over the world.

During the period under review, which covered 17 months due to the transition to the new reporting framework, the Council adopted 102 resolutions and 31 presidential statements, and issued 150 statements to the press. The Council held 356 formal meetings, of which 331 were public.

The situation in Africa remained a focus of the Council. Frequent meetings were held on Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, and South Sudan. The situation in the Middle East figured prominently on the Council's agenda as well. Meetings were held on the situation in Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen, the Palestinian question, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and Lebanon. The Council also regularly monitored the situation in Afghanistan. The Council periodically considered the situation in and around Ukraine and continued to monitor the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Council conducted five missions to Africa, which included Burundi in January; Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Senegal in March; Somalia and Kenya in May; South Sudan in September; and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola in November 2015. The Council also visited African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa during its missions in January and September 2015, and the League of Arab States in Cairo in May 2015.

The Council established the United Nations Mission in Colombia in January 2016 by resolution 2261 (2016). In the same period, two missions — the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Mission in Liberia — were reaching the final stages of their deployment.

Thematic, general and cross-cutting issues remained a priority for the Council, including non-proliferation, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, children and armed conflict, women and peace and security, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding, security sector reform, sanctions, cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, peace and security in Africa and the rule of law. The Council convened two annual open debates on its working methods. After the second debate, in July 2016 (see S/PV.7740), the Council and interested delegations from the wider membership, looked at the implementation of note S/2010/507 and other relevant notes to identify successful practices as well as possible shortcomings, and considered making necessary adjustments. The Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions started deliberations on the specific ideas and proposals made at the open debate, and is currently working to finalize its work on reviewing and updating note 507.

The Council considered the work of the International Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda and continued to monitor situations that it had referred to the International Criminal Court concerning the situation in Darfur and Libya.

Following six rounds of straw polls, the first of which was held in July 2016, the Council adopted by acclamation resolution 2311 (2016), which recommended to the General Assembly that Mr. António Guterres be appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations for a term of office from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2021. On 14 December, the Council adopted by

acclamation resolution 2324 (2016), paying tribute to outgoing Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

I look forward to this morning's discussion of the report by Member States and will convey the views of members of the General Assembly to my colleagues in the Security Council.

Ms. Sapag Muñoz de la Peña (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile welcomes the submission of the latest report of the Security Council (A/71/2), as it contributes to the needed transparency and accountability of the Council to the Assembly regarding decisions and measures adopted for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We highlight section 3, part III, entitled, "Other matters considered by the Security Council", which sets forth its recommendation for the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and the new process for doing so — with a summary of meetings, consulations, resolutions and communications of the Council in that regard. Although we would have appreciated a more analytic approach in this area, the report we have before us today is an important public record for following-up on the selection and appointment process and on the candidates presented, thereby setting a precedent for future reports and, in that way, contributing to the transparency of information within the system as well as guaranteeing the standards implemented and improvement of the system, as seen in starting the process of the joint letter from the respective Presidents of the Assembly and the Council of 15 December 2015 (A/70/623) pursuant to the criteria set forth in resolution 69/321.

With regard to the question of application of the note by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/2010/507, we note with interest the reference to the note by the President of the Security Council contained in document S/2016/619, on measures to facilitate the preparation of newly elected members and to improve the process of selection and preparation of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, a matter that we urge continue to be addressed when note 507 is updated.

The annual report should be a useful tool for accountability with respect to the working methods of the Council, and therefore a section of the report should be dedicated to this subject, which should include a record of the progress made in implementing the notes by the President and other working methods, as recommended by Member States and the Accountability Coherence and Transparency group, of which Chile is member. As is the case with the report we are discussing today, we hope that future Council reports will continue to reflect the progress and challenges faced by the Council with regard to its working methods, including improved use of the instruments at its disposal to ensure transparency and legitimacy in its work, such as recapitulative meetings, which is an important formal tool at the disposal of non-permanent members that, in our judgment, is poorly utilized.

Finally, we urge that the Council's decisions on peacekeeping under resolution 70/262 be addressed and reflected in greater detail in future reports of the Security Council.

Mrs. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation welcomes the convening of today's meeting to discuss the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly for the period from 1 August 2015 to 31 December 2016 (A/71/2).

Cuba regrets that, as in previous years, the report is merely a descriptive account of meetings, activities and decisions of the Council, whereas the vast majority of the States Members of the United Nations have reiterated the need for an annual report on the work of the Security Council that is exhaustive and analytical. How much longer will we have to wait for this formal and insubstantial procedure to become an exercise of genuine accountability to the General Assembly that allows all Member States to assess the causes and implications of actions undertaken by the Security Council? We reiterate that, in carrying out the functions incumbent upon it as part of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council acts in the name of all Member States. As such, the Council must comply with the obligation established in Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter to submit special reports on its work for consideration by the General Assembly.

Cuba reiterates its concern about the lack of transparency and democracy in the Security Council. While there has been an increase during the period under review in the number of public meetings and an unprecedented process of consultation and exchanges with Member States during the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, the Council continues to tend to work fundamentally in private

and to make decisions without taking into account the concerns of non-permanent members.

Urgent changes in the working methods of the Security Council that allow true participation by all its members in its work and in the decision-making process are required. That includes formalizing its rules of procedure, which have remained provisional for over 70 years. Accordingly, Cuba once again proposes that the closed-door consultations in the Security Council be the exception; that its membership be extended in the two categories — permanent and non-permanent — without selective or discriminatory criteria, with the aim of finding a remedy for the insufficient representation of developing countries in the Council; and that there no longer exist the obsolete and undemocratic right to veto.

Besides changes in the working methods and the composition of the members of the Security Council, the Council should adjust its functions to the mandate established in the Charter and observe all General Assembly resolutions, the main body for deliberation, policymaking and representation in the United Nations. The trend of the Security Council to consider issues and assume functions that do not belong to it, thereby usurping the role assigned to other organs, particularly the General Assembly, must end. We stress the need for an appropriate balance between the principal organs of the United Nations, in accordance with the Charter.

No reform of the United Nations, including the one currently being promoted, will be effective or real without a thorough process of reform of the Security Council. What is urgently needed is a truly transparent, representative, democratic and efficient Security Council.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Transparency and accountability in the relations between the Security Council and the General Assembly, in accordance with the Assembly's powers set forth in Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, are indispensable principles for the Council's communication with the other members of the Organization. Strengthening the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council is a key and unequivocal need to address global challenges in the maintenance of international peace and security in an efficient and coordinated manner.

Although the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly in recent years has improved substantially, there are areas where further progress is required. For example, the content of the report should be less descriptive and should, on the contrary, focus on encouraging a genuine exercise of reflection by the General Assembly. It would be very useful to have special reports submitted to the General Assembly on a thematic basis on issues of international concern affecting the maintenance of international peace and security. Moreover, it would also be desirable for the report to include a section on draft resolutions or Council measures that were voted on and on which no agreement was reached in order to promote greater accountability in maintaining international peacekeeping and security.

On that preceding point, Mexico, together with France, has been actively promoting a voluntary restriction of the use of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council in cases of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Both countries have been working together for more than two years to maintain momentum in the process, which we hope will result in the establishment of a voluntary and collective agreement among the five permanent members of the Council to achieve this goal.

The veto is not a privilege, but a responsibility of permanent members in maintaining international peace and security. We acknowledge that the only viable and realistic possibility for restricting its use lies in its regulation through the identification of exceptions. Therefore, we invite countries that have not yet done so, including the permanent members of the Council, to join in supporting this Franco-Mexican initiative.

We welcome the fact that the Security Council addresses issues of interest to the international community and to Mexico, through public and open debates, not only as a way to contribute to inclusion and interaction between the Council and the rest of the membership, but also as a tool to contribute to transparency, legitimacy and to promote greater effectiveness.

In the case of peacekeeping operations, as a troop-contributing country, Mexico is convinced that the constant adaptation of operations to respond to new challenges and paradigms related to maintaining international peace and security remains the United Nations most visible and emblematic political tool to address these challenges.

A clear example in that regard is the conclusion of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti

to make way for the new United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti. That points to a favourable development of the situation in that country and demonstrates the important efforts being made jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Haiti to achieve stability and security in the country, which will guarantee the basis for a sustainable and lasting peace and ensure that Haiti effectively meets the Sustainable Development Goals. Similarly, we note the coordination between the Security Council and the Government of Colombia and the support of the international community for the peace process in that country, which is an example of political will and collaboration that we should all bear in mind.

Finally, Mexico welcomes the attention accorded by the Security Council to the paradigm shift represented by the concept of sustainable peace, the implementation of which will redirect the work of the United Nations in a coherent and cross-cutting way throughout the Organization towards a more sophisticated and peace-oriented approach by building capacities and tools to address conflicts in every phase and prevent conflicts by focusing on their causes. Mexico chairs the Group of Friends of Sustaining Peace, which brings together 36 countries from different regions that share an interest in coordinating efforts to continue reflecting on a cross-cutting and more long-term understanding and implementation of the concept of sustainable peace in the United Nations.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): We thank the members of the Security Council and the Secretariat for producing the annual report of the Security Council (A/71/2). I also thank the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of Egypt, for presenting the report earlier this morning.

The annual debate on the report of the Security Council has become a ritual, and by describing this discussion as a ritual it is not my intention to diminish its importance. Rituals are indeed important in organizations, especially in our Organization. From Singapore's point of view, this annual debate is an opportunity for United Nations Members to comment on the work of the Security Council. This annual debate establishes the important point that there is a link between the work of the General Assembly and the Security Council and that the Security Council does not work in isolation.

I also wish to express my disappointment about the fact that the decision to schedule this debate today was made very late. Also, the report was finalized and circulated very late. This gives Member States very little time to prepare for a serious and substantive debate. I said earlier that this debate has become a ritual, but we have to make this a meaningful ritual. We should give members enough time to study the documents so that they can come prepared to contribute constructively. If Member States are not given adequate time, this will indeed become a meaningless ritual, and that surely is not our intention, either in the General Assembly or in the Security Council.

Let me now make some comments on the substance of the report.

In our view, the report provides a good overview of the activities of the Council for the period from 1 August 2015 to 31 December 2016. We welcome the move to align the report with the calendar year. We would like to make some suggestions to improve the content of the report so that it can aid Council members, as well as the wider membership and the international community, in assessing the work of the Council and its effectiveness in addressing threats to international peace and security.

First, the annual report could be more analytical and informative. Instead of simply and factually listing the number of meetings held, the resolutions and statements adopted and the number of missions organized, we think that more effort should be made towards a more analytical narrative. For example, how much of the Council's time during the reporting period was spent on which subjects? How many products were issued on which topics? Of each new resolution adopted, to what extent were its provisions implemented?

It would also be useful to have a summary of the results and outcomes achieved, if any at all, during the reporting period. One way could be to compare the situations at the beginning and the end of the reporting period for each section of the report. What were the key developments, for example? What impact did the 102 Council resolutions, the 31 presidential statements and 150 press statements have? The Council's mandate costs the General Assembly between $7 and $8 billion each year. What were the key substantive outcomes of that expenditure on the Council's decisions? Have its operations brought about tangible improvements on the ground? At least, what is our assessment of the progress

made in terms of improving the situation on the ground? The General Assembly has a right to know, and the international community has a right to know. We would encourage greater thought to be given to indicators and benchmarks for the Council's performance in fulfilling its responsibility for addressing threats to international peace and security.

Secondly, the annual report should be more complete and more comprehensive. Monthly assessment reports should be completed and circulated by every Security Council President as part of the process of finalizing the annual report. Paragraph 8 of the report states that those monthly assessments can be found online. We note that for the reporting period, only five have been uploaded, and reports from 12 members of the Council, including four permanent members, are still missing. Why is that? As we work to strive for more openness and transparency in the work of the United Nations, we find it surprising that some countries that have had the privilege of serving on the Council — including some whose terms have expired — have not yet published the assessments of their presidencies.

Thirdly, on a broader level, we think that the annual report could be improved by aligning it better with the repertoire. The repertoire provides institutional memory for the Council's evolving practice. There would certainly be greater utility in aligning the calendars of those two documents and leveraging the historical perspective that the repertoire can give the annual report. It would give the membership a better sense of how mandates have evolved, a grasp of how the Council has responded to particular situations and a way to assess the Council's impact and effectiveness over time.

To that end, we are pleased to note that the Council is reviewing and updating presidential note S/2010/507 to include new proposals and ideas on how it can improve its work. We look forward to seeing it adopted and circulated as soon as possible. The issue of the Council's working methods, particularly the ongoing efforts to improve transparency and effectiveness, is an important one for many countries, especially small States. We hope that the Council members will take this task seriously and continue working to make the Council more open, transparent, efficient and effective.

Lastly, we note from the annual report that not all the Council's subsidiary bodies have convened formal meetings. In our view, they should all hold at least one formal meeting a year. The purpose of such meetings is to give each subsidiary body a chance to report to the wider United Nations membership on the outcome of its work during the year. That in turn, we believe, would enhance the transparency of the Council's work.

The annual report of the Security Council, and today's plenary meeting, are important avenues whereby the wider United Nations membership can provide its input and views on the Council's work. We have submitted our suggestions with the aim of helping to improve the transparency and openness of that work. In turn, we hope that will help to promote greater accountability and more effective action on the part of the Security Council. We hope that Council members listening to this debate will work to improve the content and format of the annual report next year. Improving its openness and transparency should be a common endeavour that we should all strive for, and we should all strive to make this annual ritual a meaningful and substantive one.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to express my thanks for the presentation of the report (A/71/2) on the past 17 months of the work of the Security Council, which from now on will become an actual annual report that I believe will provide us with a more in-depth analysis of its content. The report that the Egyptian presidency of the Council presented to us today has begun to take account of the recommendations of many Member States as well as the conclusions reached in meetings and debates on the Council's working methods as they relate to the content of the report, which is moving towards the greater degree of transparency, accountability and openness that we need in this presentation, one that is so important to the General Assembly. However, in the coming years, we hope that there will be more analysis and less description, with elements that will give insight into the Council's fundamental task of seeking and maintaining peace and security, as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations.

Where the report concerns my country, I would like to express Colombia's thanks for the Security Council's continuing support to our peace process through the United Nations Mission in Colombia, which is discussed in the report, and to the rest of the process, which I am sure will be included in the next Security Council report with regard to the progress of the first and second special missions in 2017. Security Council resolution 2307 (2016) and the special political

mission approved in July are concrete examples of the results of the Council's determined efforts for peace. We hope that an analysis of this in the next annual report will be helpful to other special political missions and peacekeeping operations. Once again, we thank the Security Council for today's presentation and we hope that in the next few years to seeing our needs, as Member States, covered with greater transparency, analysis and commitment to the purpose that we all share.

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

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Security Council contained in document A/71/2?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 28?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 13 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Draft resolution (A/71/L.83)

The Acting President: Before proceeding further, I would like to make the following corrections to draft resolution A/71/L.83 in order to revert to language that was agreed on during the negotiations.

In the first line of operative paragraph 7, the word "intergovernmental" should be added before the words "High-level Conference". Operative paragraph 8 (a) should be combined with operative paragraph 8 to form a single paragraph that will then read "Invites other relevant stakeholders", with the rest continuing. Subsequently, paragraph 8 (b) will be renumbered to read 8 (a). Also, the word "invites" will be added before the words "non-governmental organizations". Furthermore, the word "intergovernmental" will be added before the words "high-level conference". The paragraph will read:

> "Invites non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to register with the Secretariat in order to participate in the intergovernmental high-level conference."

Paragraph 9 will be renumbered to read 8 (b), and the subsequent paragraphs will be renumbered. In the new paragraph 8 (b), the word "proposed" will be added to the second-to-last line so that it reads: "to submit the proposed list to Member States", and so forth.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/71/L.83, entitled "Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation", as orally corrected.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.83, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/71/L.83, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 71/318).

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

Mr. Kimmel (United States of America): The United States joined in the consensus adoption of resolution 71/318, which establishes the modalities for the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. We would like to thank Argentina for its generous offer to cover associated costs for the planned 2019 Conference in Buenos Aires.

We would like to also take this opportunity, however, to briefly explain our position on key issues, as highlighted during the negotiation process, and in line with reform efforts that the Secretary-General and Member States are currently undertaking.

These key issues deal with a central reform question: the discussion of how the United Nations should best deploy its limited resources to meet the critical and expanding needs of the world. We continue to believe that our priority must be on improving people's lives. We, as Member States, must do better in our efforts to curb spending on meetings, conferences and unproductive exercises. Throughout the negotiation process we expressed serious concerns about two items in the resolution that we do not believe are the most efficient use of our limited resources.

An intergovernmental negotiation for an agreed outcome and the possibility of annual meetings on the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation will both require spending United Nations and Member State resources on negotiations that could otherwise be diverted to people in need in developing countries. We believe that these are valid concerns in light of the Secretary-General's reform initiative, the aim of which is to promote efficiency, effectiveness and results in all United Nations activities.

In addition we believe that the transparency and accountability of the United Nations in promoting South-South cooperation is very important. We welcome efforts to make United Nations South-South cooperation bureaucracies more efficient, effective, transparent and accountable, as called for in last year's resolution 70/222.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Adonia Ayebare of Uganda, President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, for having skilfully laid out the complex consultations on this important matter, as well as to the Bureau of the High-Level Committee for their steadfast support throughout. I also thank Member States for their valuable contributions to reaching an agreement on resolution 71/318.

The General Assembly has concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 13.

Agenda item 106 (*continued*)

Crime prevention and criminal justice

Draft resolution (A/71/L.81)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/71/L.81, entitled "Draft outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.81?

Draft resolution A/71/L.81 was adopted (resolution 71/319).

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

Ms. Lind (Estonia): The European Union (EU) and its member States welcome the adoption today of resolution 71/319, transmitting the draft political declaration on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons for adoption at the high-level meeting in September. The EU would first like to commend the dedicated work of the Permanent Representatives of Qatar and Belgium as co-facilitators of the consultations that secured this positive result. The draft political declaration constitutes a wide-ranging basis for invigorated efforts to eliminate trafficking, including by highlighting clear linkages with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, addressing the demand that sustains it and ensuring support for victims and respect for their human rights.

As the draft declaration underscores, action is needed on many fronts, from implementing key international instruments and developing national strategies to the United Nations focusing on situations of heightened vulnerability, including in conflict, and ensuring its own procurement is free of trafficking.

Notwithstanding these positive elements, the EU had hoped that the declaration would include stronger references to recommendations made by the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons. The EU believes that all relevant actors must be mobilized to ensure a more effective implementation of the Global Plan of Action, including Governments, regional and international organizations, civil society, national human rights institutions and the private sector. In that regard we would have wished to see more robust language on national human rights institutions in the political declaration. Moreover, we do not regard the final text relating to these institutions as a compelling precedent.

The EU would also encourage all States members of the United Nations to pay heed to the encouragement included in the modalities resolution for the high-level meeting to consider including in their delegations representatives of national human rights institutions, law enforcement, civil society, trafficking survivors and the private sector.

In conclusion, I assure the Assembly that the EU and its member States are determined to intensify our contribution to global efforts to address the scourge of trafficking, including through policy and funding endeavours, and we look forward to a fruitful high-level meeting in September and to bringing added impetus to our collective efforts in this domain.

Mr. Wheeler (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. In our national capacity, I would like to reinforce four points.

First, trafficking is a global problem that demands a global response. In that regard, the United Kingdom supports the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and welcomes this political declaration. We are especially pleased that the declaration articulates a holistic response, makes linkages to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and includes a clear focus on conflict. We are open to further discussion on how, in practice, these measures are taken forward.

Secondly, we hope that Member States will continue to engage with the experts. For example, the Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking In Persons (ICAT) proposed that it be tasked to address definitional issues. This practical recommendation did not, unfortunately, make it into the final political declaration. We hope that ideas such as these will be revisited through upcoming processes.

Thirdly, the Plan of Action calls for improved coordination. It is critical that we, as Member States, continue to promote a more coherent response across all three pillars of the United Nations. We look forward to being informed by the Secretary-General of his efforts. We are open to ideas on how ICAT can be strengthened.

Fourthly, coherent action by the United Nations is necessary but not sufficient. At the end of the day, Member States themselves must take action on the scourge of trafficking in persons. This in turn will be dependent on political leadership. That is why my Prime Minister will focus significant attention on human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour during the high-level week of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. The United Kingdom hopes to use the collective presence of world leaders to create a sense of greater urgency on these issues. We hope that this will generate momentum ahead of the high-level meeting on the Global Plan of Action that will take place the following week.

The Acting President: I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani of Qatar and Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve of Belgium, the co-facilitators of the informal consultations, who demonstrated great ability and patience in their conduct of the discussions and complex negotiations on the draft outcome document. I also thank Member States for their valuable contributions to reaching an agreement on the draft outcome document.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 106?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.