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President: Ms. Narváez Ojeda (Vice-President) (Chile)

Contents

Agenda item 15: Regional cooperation

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions

(c) Crime prevention and criminal justice

(d) Narcotic drugs (*continued*)

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions

(k) United Nations Forum on Forests

(h) International cooperation in tax matters (*continued*)

(i) Geospatial information (*continued*)

(f) Public administration and development (*continued*)

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions

(g) Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues

(f) Human rights (*continued*)

Agenda item 17: Non-governmental organizations (*continued*)

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In the absence of Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria), Ms. Narváez Ojeda (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 15: Regional cooperation (E/2023/15 and E/2023/15/Add.1)

1. **Ms. Ortiz de Urbina** (Acting Director of the Regional Commissions, New York Office), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2023/15), said that the report provided an update on regional approaches to critical global issues, as well as an overview of the work done by the regional commissions during the reporting period. The addendum to the report (E/2023/15/Add.1) contained information on relevant resolutions and decisions adopted by the regional commissions.

2. The global economy was experiencing a slowdown and high inflation, while countries grappled with the climate crisis, environmental degradation, deepening inequalities, rising geopolitical tensions and conflicts, and the erosion of global norms and institutions. That confluence of challenges was undermining global solidarity and trust and jeopardizing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that context, guided by the outcomes of key global and regional conferences, the regional commissions continued to leverage their roles as thought leaders and convening platforms in order to advance regional action on the Sustainable Development Goals, generate knowledge and data, support effective country-level action and increase political momentum for the Sustainable Development Goals Summit.

3. The report of the Secretary-General comprised two parts. The first part gave an update on the state of progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda across the five regions, and illustrated how the regional commissions were helping countries to move from risk to resilience and achieve a more sustainable and equitable future. The second part provided an overview of regional and interregional initiatives spearheaded by the regional commissions, as well as actions taken to fully implement the repositioning of the United Nations development system, particularly in terms of regional reform.

4. In the area of financing sustainable recovery and resilience, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) had coordinated the work of the African High-level Working Group on the Global Financial Architecture, which comprised African ministers of finance, planning

and economic development, and representatives of the African Union, major regional banks, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The Working Group, which was a robust platform for advocacy and coordination, had called on the Group of 20 to advance the debt sustainability agenda. In the Arab and Asia-Pacific regions, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) had launched the Climate/Sustainable Development Goals Debt Swap Mechanism, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) was providing technical assistance to several Governments in the area of green bonds.

5. With respect to energy security and sustainability, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) had been conducting thematic studies and technical cooperation activities with the countries of the so-called lithium triangle, namely Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Chile. The Economic Commission for Europe had continued its work in the areas of energy efficiency and digitalization, and was actively supporting the implementation of the Framework Guidelines for Energy Efficiency Standards in Buildings.

6. In the area of environmental protection and food systems transformation, ESCWA was working in partnership with the League of Arab States and other regional organizations on regional water and food security policies. ESCAP was steering work on the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution, which was a comprehensive framework for cooperation to improve air quality management.

7. With regard to the promotion of digital cooperation in support of the Goals, several regional commissions had facilitated the establishment of regional frameworks and agendas. ECA had assisted with the development of the African Union Data Policy Framework, ESCWA had formulated the Arab Digital Agenda for the period 2023–2033 and ECLAC had lent its support to the adoption of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean for the period 2022–2024.

8. The regional commissions remained committed to improved coordination and coherent and impactful delivery of work, for the advancement of the 2030 Agenda in all countries and regions.

9. **Mr. Garrido Melo** (Chile) said that while 48 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goal targets were moving in the right direction, progress was not as strong as it had been in previous years. The Goals relating to poverty eradication, equality, cities, the environment, peace and justice were not on track to be achieved by

2030. In that regard, it was critical to accelerate efforts towards delivering the Goals before the end of the decade. ECLAC was doing very important work to correct the trajectory in pursuit of the Goals and promote policies that ensured the sustainability, inclusion and resilience of countries in the region. Among its most notable efforts were those concerning the transition to clean energies and, in particular the thematic studies and technical assistance cooperation conducted with the countries comprising the so-called lithium triangle, including Chile. In response to high debt levels, ECLAC had established the Caribbean Resilience Fund to address the extreme vulnerability of small island developing States in the region.

10. The eighth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, which had been held in Uruguay in November 2022, had approved the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean, with a view to promoting digital transformation and strengthening regional alliances, particularly in the area of trade integration and regional cooperation. The fifteenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which had been held in Argentina in November 2022, had made progress on commitments for integrating the care society and its financing, in order to reverse gender inequality and advance in the empowerment of women. The new Executive Secretary of ECLAC had placed particular emphasis on productive development, education, resilience and digital transformation, as priority areas for a just, sustainable and inclusive recovery from the multiple crises that had affected the region, with a cross-cutting focus on institutional capacity-building.

11. **Mr. Chumakov** (Observer for the Russian Federation) said that, although it was not a member of the Economic and Social Council, his delegation opposed the latter's adoption of draft resolution IV on endorsing decision J (70) of the Economic Commission for Europe on the implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention). The decision to create the mechanism had been adopted by the meeting of the parties to the Aarhus Convention that had taken place in Geneva on 21 October 2021. The position of Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders under the Aarhus Convention had subsequently been established within the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe, financed by voluntary contributions from the European Union. The mandate of that Special Rapporteur included the conduct of information campaigns and political

mediation, aimed at protecting persons who were being persecuted for attempting to uphold their rights under the Aarhus Convention.

12. On that basis, the seventieth session of the Economic Commission for Europe, which had been held in April 2023, had adopted decision J (70), which was now before the Council for adoption. The Economic Commission for Europe was requesting increased support from the United Nations Secretary-General, to strengthen the capacity of its secretariat to implement the mechanism. Decision J (70) had been adopted by a vote and did not reflect the position of all the States members of the Economic Commission for Europe. It had been imposed by a politically motivated group of countries that was bound by bloc discipline and that was abusing its numerical supremacy within the Commission. In practice, the decision to implement the rapid response mechanism supposed the creation of a single position, namely that of legal affairs officer, at the P-3 level, financed from the United Nations regular budget, with responsibility for providing assistance to the Special Rapporteur. The programme budget implications amounted to \$251,700.

13. In that context, it should be noted that among the legal instruments of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Aarhus Convention already had one the largest allocations of staff members, with four of those posts financed from the regular budget of the United Nations. Initially, the decision to create the mechanism had been adopted within the framework of the Convention by a small number of States parties. As such, it should not create an additional burden for the States Members of the United Nations that were not parties to the Convention. It was unacceptable to ask the entire membership of the United Nations to cover the costs related to the mechanism, which served the interests of a small group of countries that had the financial means to do so. Moreover, the work of the Special Rapporteur was of a human rights nature, which did not correspond to the mandate of the Economic Commission for Europe.

14. Owing to politically motivated actions, the Russian Federation was not a member of the Council and was not able to legally dispute the adoption of decision J (70). His delegation would not consider itself to be bound by that decision, in the event that it was adopted. It was not in the interest of the majority to create within the Council a precedent for extending ambiguous regional decisions to all United Nations Member States. The members of the Council should adopt a balanced decision and, for the foregoing reasons, his delegation requested that the draft resolution in question be put to a vote, in accordance with rule 59 of the rules of procedure of the Council. Members should vote against the adoption of the draft resolution.

15. **Ms. Cao** Liwen (China) said that significant differences persisted among the States members of the Economic Commission for Europe, with respect to its draft resolution IV on the implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders under the Aarhus Convention. In the light of the outlined programme budget implications, many members of the Council, including China, continued to have doubts, and hoped for further elaboration from the Economic Commission for Europe on the need to create new posts. Accordingly, the Council should defer taking action on the draft resolution to give members more time for discussion, with a view to reaching consensus and addressing the budgetary concerns of all parties.

16. **Mr. Evseenko** (Observer for Belarus) said that, with regard to draft resolution IV contained in document [E/2023/15/Add.1](#) on the implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders under the Aarhus Convention, decision J (70) of the Economic Commission for Europe did not enjoy consensus. There was no justification for allocating resources from the United Nations regular budget to service the Aarhus Convention, which was not universal. Furthermore, there was no need to create a new mechanism within that Convention, which would require capacity-building within the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe that was financed from the United Nations regular budget. The wording of decision J (70) and, in particular, the indication that "...the number of the Parties to the Convention was progressively growing" was not accurate. In 2022, the Convention had lost one of its parties, owing to the politicization of its agenda and the use of discriminatory approaches in its work. Regrettably, there had been a deterioration of the fundamental principles of the Convention, disdain for international law and a loss of multilateralism. All members of the Council should refrain from adopting decision J (70) which had not enjoyed consensus within the Economic Commission for Europe.

Draft resolution: Reinforcing the role of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning in assisting members of the Economic Commission for Africa in strengthening development planning and improving their capacity to formulate and manage effective public sector policies for structural transformation and sustainable development

17. **The President** drew attention to the draft resolution contained in chapter I, section A, of the addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields ([E/2023/15/Add.1](#)).

18. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Council), reading out a statement of programme budget implications in connection with the draft resolution in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Council, said that detailed cost estimates and their underlying assumptions for the requirements had been provided in the annex to the written version of the oral statement circulated on 23 July 2023.

19. Should the Council approve the draft resolution, additional programme budget appropriations for 2024 amounting to an estimated \$1,086,900, net of staff assessment, would be requested, in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Council adopted during its 2023 session. An additional amount estimated at \$105,400 would arise under section 36, Staff assessment, and would also be requested in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Council adopted during its 2023 session. That sum would have to be offset by the equivalent amount under income, section 1, Income from staff assessment. A similar level of resources would be requested annually, from 2025, in the context of the respective proposed programme budget.

20. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Action on recommendations contained in the addendum to the report of the Secretary-General (E/2023/15/Add.1)

21. **The President** drew attention to the draft resolutions contained in chapter I, section B, of the addendum to the report.

Draft resolution I: Best practice guidance for effective management of coal mine methane at national level: monitoring, reporting, verification and mitigation

Draft resolution II: United Nations resource management system principles and requirements

Draft resolution III: Request to strengthen the role of the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe in supporting member States in building resilient energy systems and modernizing resource management systems

Draft resolution IV: Implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

22. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Council), reading out a statement of programme budget implications in

connection with draft resolutions III and IV in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Council, said that detailed cost estimates and their underlying assumptions for the requirements had been provided in the annex to the written version of the oral statement circulated on 23 July 2023.

23. Should the Council approve draft resolution III, additional programme budget appropriations for 2024 amounting to \$250,400, recurrent, and \$23,300, non-recurrent, would be requested, in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Council adopted during its 2023 session. An additional amount of \$25,500 would arise under section 36, Staff assessment, and would also be requested in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Council adopted during its 2023 session. That sum would have to be offset by the equivalent amount under income, section 1, Income from staff assessment. The recurrent resource requirement would be requested annually from 2025, in the context of the respective proposed programme budget.

24. Should the Council approve draft resolution IV, additional programme budget appropriations for 2024 amounting to \$250,200, recurrent, and \$14,600, non-recurrent, would be requested, in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Council adopted during its 2023 session. An additional amount of \$19,200 would arise under section 36, Staff assessment, and would also be requested in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Council adopted during its 2023 session. That sum would have to be offset by the equivalent amount under income, section 1, Income from staff assessment. The recurrent resource requirement would be requested annually from 2025, in the context of the respective proposed programme budget.

25. *Draft resolutions I, II and III were adopted.*

26. **The President** said that the representative of China had moved to defer action on draft resolution IV, within the context of rule 50 of the rules of procedure of the Council.

27. **Mr. Heartney** (United States of America) said that there was a need specify to which session of the Council the proposed action would be deferred.

28. **Ms. Cao Liwen** (China) said that the proposed deferral of the consideration of draft resolution IV would give the Council more time to review it, in order

to reach a consensus on its adoption. Her delegation did not have a specific timeline in mind for the deferral, but remained open to suggestions.

29. **Mr. Heartney** (United States of America) said that despite some opposition to the draft resolution following its proposal, it had subsequently been adopted by the Economic Commission for Europe. The programme budget implications were relatively moderate and the reason behind the request for additional support, namely rapid response for environmental defenders, was very important, especially in the light of Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine. One of the three countries that had not supported the draft resolution, Russia, had directly attacked Ukraine, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, and another, Belarus, had cooperated closely with Russia. There was no satisfactory reason for the proposed deferral. The draft resolution had been fully discussed by the Economic Council for Europe, and the same objections had been considered and rejected. The Council should proceed to adopt the draft resolution.

30. **Ms. Cao Liwen** (China) said that, within the United Nations system, regional commissions might have some degree of preliminary consensus on decisions. It was important not to encourage the presentation of controversial decisions to the Council for further action.

31. *In accordance with rule 50 of the rules of procedure, a vote was taken on the motion put forward by China to defer action on draft resolution IV.*

In favour:

China, India.

Against:

Afghanistan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mexico, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Solomon Islands, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe.

32. *The motion to defer action on draft resolution IV was rejected by 22 votes to 2, with 18 abstentions.*

33. *Draft resolution IV was adopted.*

34. **Ms. Cao Liwen** (China) said that it was regrettable that the Council had insisted on reviewing and considering draft resolutions that had not enjoyed consensus and that had given rise to different views and concerns. The Council should take the concerns expressed by members into consideration.

35. **Mr. Chumakov** (Observer for the Russian Federation) said that, while his delegation was not able to speak under rule 50 of the rules of procedure, it was regrettable that the delegation of the United States had politicized the work of the Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations, with references to the Ukraine conflict. His delegation's objection to draft resolution IV was in no way related to that conflict, but rather to the fact that a group of European States was abusing the human rights agenda, in order to interfere in the internal affairs of other States. Unfortunately, the Council had not been able to pay sufficient attention to that dire situation. He hoped that there would be greater possibilities in the future to delve into the real processes that lay at the foundation of initiatives such as those of the Aarhus Convention.

Draft resolution: Admission of Djibouti to membership of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

36. **The President** drew attention to the draft resolution contained in chapter I, section C, of the addendum to the report of the Secretary-General (E/2023/15/Add.1).

37. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions

(c) Crime prevention and criminal justice (E/2023/30 and E/2023/30/Add.1)

38. **Ms. Faxas de Jorgensen** (Observer for the Dominican Republic), Vice-Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, speaking via video link, introduced the reports of the Commission on its thirty-second session (E/2023/30 and E/2023/30/Add.1). She said that record levels of participation had been recorded during that session. The Commission had adopted by consensus six draft resolutions, which were before the Council for consideration and would contribute to the achievement of various Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 16, which was at the core of the Commission's mandate.

39. Among the Commission's recommendations to the Council was a draft resolution that focused specifically on its contribution to the accelerated implementation of

the 2030 Agenda. In that draft resolution, the General Assembly would, inter alia, invite the Commission to continue developing policies and awareness-raising initiatives, at the global level, on accelerating the achievement of the Goals; request the Commission to encourage Member States presenting voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum on sustainable development to share their experiences, progress made and impediments in implementing those aspects of the 2030 Agenda that were related to the work of the Commission; and encourage Member States to consider including information related to the work of the Commission in their voluntary national reviews for 2024.

40. The Commission had agreed on the substantive agenda for the fifteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which would be held in the United Arab Emirates in 2026, under the overarching theme "Accelerating crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: protecting people and planet and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the digital age". Under the comprehensive and forward-looking agenda, and its interrelated workshop topics, States would have an opportunity to thoroughly discuss four overarching elements: advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law; protecting people and planet; implementing the 2030 Agenda; and making responsible use of the digital age.

41. At its thirty-second session, the Commission had focused on access to justice, in support of the related Goal of the General Assembly. On the opening day of the session, a special event had been held on the achievement of the Goals, in the presence of the President of the General Assembly. The thematic discussion of the regular session was held under the theme of "Enhancing the functioning of the criminal justice system to ensure access to justice and to realize a safe and secure society". In June 2023, the Chair of the Commission had participated in the General Assembly high-level debate on "Equal access to justice for all: advancing reforms for peaceful, just and inclusive societies". In the margins of that high-level debate, the Chair had made an intervention at a high-level side event on "Achieving people-centred justice: policy development and emerging evidence to reach Goal 16". In July 2023, the Chairs of the Vienna-based Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had held a joint side event during the high-level political forum, focused on access to justice and health services.

42. As mandated by the General Assembly, the Commission was holding annual thematic discussions in

follow-up to the Kyoto Declaration on Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and Rule of Law: Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The third round of those discussions would be held in September 2023, focusing on several themes, including access to justice and effective, accountable, impartial and inclusive institutions.

43. In the lead-up to the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, the Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice had participated in the Council's contribution segment, which had highlighted measures to accelerate recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the achievement of the Goals. In fact, the Chair had underscored on various occasions that a reference to the impact of crime prevention and criminal justice on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda should be added to the declaration of the Summit. The Commission had provided a written contribution to the high-level political forum. During the Council's management segment, the Chair had shared innovative actions and made concrete recommendations on the cross-cutting issue of people-centred resilient institutions and risk-informed policies.

44. With respect to the 2022 review of the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies, while the Commission had already been implementing a number of Council recommendations, it had increased its engagement to leave no one behind by enhancing disability inclusion and making increased efforts to place disability inclusion on the substantive agenda of its meetings. It had also stepped up its consideration of long-term trends, such as demographic trends, and was exploring further work in that regard with other entities involved in crime prevention and criminal justice. The Commission was seeking to link its work more actively to voluntary national reviews through the abovementioned draft resolution.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (E/2023/30)

45. **The President** drew attention to the draft resolutions contained in chapter I, section A, of the report.

Draft resolution I: Follow-up to the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Fifteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Draft resolution II: Reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and reintegration

Draft resolution III: Enhancing the contributions of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Draft resolution IV: Technical assistance provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime related to counter-terrorism

Draft resolution V: Equal access to justice for all

46. **Mr. Milano** (Italy) said that his delegation looked forward to the adoption by consensus of the draft resolutions, including that of draft resolution IV on technical assistance provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for counter-terrorism. In collaboration with other delegations, Italy had promoted and facilitated draft resolution IV within the framework of the work of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Despite the efforts made and the commitment reaffirmed in the eighth United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy review, terrorism remained a global threat with evolving and growing manifestations. A multi-agency and multilateral approach was critical for eradicating terrorism, in order to tackle its deep roots, which were often linked to poverty, lack of social inclusion and poor governance. As part of its support for the role of the United Nations in fostering international cooperation in the fight against transnational criminal activity, Italy supported UNODC by assisting Member States in the prevention and countering of terrorism.

47. In that regard, it was important to regularly review and update the mandate of UNODC. Draft resolution IV highlighted the importance of countering terrorism motivated by religion or by xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance. It also focused attention on the fight against the financing of terrorist activities, the involvement of young people in prevention measures, the use of new technologies and the gender dimension in counter-terrorism policies and instruments. Italy would continue working with other Member States and United Nations offices and agencies to strengthen policies and build capacities to counter the global threat of terrorism.

48. *Draft resolutions I, II, III, IV and V were adopted.*

49. **Mr. Black** (Canada) said that his delegation had submitted draft resolution V, which was the first in the history of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on the important topic of equal access to justice for all. The broad support shown for that draft resolution demonstrated that its objective resonated around the world. Canada welcomed the adoption by consensus of draft resolution V by the Council and was committed to supporting its full implementation. The text highlighted many key elements of justice, such as the principles of equality before and under the law, the mainstreaming of gender perspectives, access to legal aid and restorative justice programming, and the need for additional protection for persons in vulnerable situations. It also emphasized the importance of using quantitative and qualitative disaggregated data to inform evidence-based decision-making, and of multisectoral, multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder collaboration to ensure effective and inclusive justice measures. Those actions were a key step towards the full realization of Sustainable Development Goal 16 and the vision of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.

Draft decision: Report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on its thirty-second session and provisional agenda for its thirty-third session

50. **The President** drew attention to the draft decision contained in chapter I, section B, of the report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (E/2023/30).

51. *The draft decision was adopted.*

52. **The President** said that she took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on its reconvened thirty-first session, as contained in document E/2023/30/Add.1.

53. *It was so decided.*

(d) Narcotic drugs (continued) (E/2023/28/Add.1)

54. **The President** said that she took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its reconvened sixty-fifth session, as contained in document E/2023/28/Add.1.

55. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions

(k) United Nations Forum on Forests (E/2023/42)

56. **Ms. Zamora Zumbado** (Costa Rica), Vice-Chair of the United Nations Forum on Forests, introducing the report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its eighteenth session (E/2023/42), said that the session had been held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, from 8 to 12 May 2023, with approximately 400 participants attending in person. At the session, members of the Forum had taken stock of progress towards the global forest goals of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and had identified key opportunities and challenges in that regard. Among those opportunities were some that were interlinked with the Sustainable Development Goals, as reviewed by the 2023 high-level political forum and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. They included emerging issues relating to forests, energy and livelihoods, challenges surrounding the mobilization of increased financing for forests and the need to strengthen cooperation in the context of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and among regional and subregional entities and stakeholders.

57. The opening session of the Forum had featured statements by the Chair of the eighteenth session, the President of the Council and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, and had been followed by a series of panel discussions with multilateral and regional financial institutions and banks, the private sector and member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The Forum had received a progress update on preparations for the upcoming midterm review on the international arrangement of forests. Throughout the session, members had identified opportunities and priorities for action among themselves and with partners and stakeholders. The issues considered included the threats facing the sustainability of forests and their negative impact on forest biodiversity, climate and local communities; the need to address the drivers of deforestation in a holistic and comprehensive landscape approach; the need to recognize the vital role played by Indigenous Peoples and local communities as custodians of forests; the need for improved data and indicators, and for a greater focus on nature-based solutions and natural capital accounting; and the need to scale up technical assistance, financing from various sources, knowledge management and information-sharing.

58. During the session, the Government of India had announced its intention to organize a country-led initiative on wildfires and forest certification, in support

of the work of the Forum. That initiative would focus directly on the growing risks and impacts of forest fires in many parts of the world, and on how the international community could collaborate to address them. Forest-based actions and solutions were extremely important in accelerating efforts to fully implement the 2030 Agenda, recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and address the impact of extreme global weather patterns. Healthy forests offered a path to a sustainable future for all and held a significant potential for synergies with other sectors.

59. The session had been a technical one, with no negotiated outcome. The report contained the Chair's summary and proposals for consideration at the Forum's nineteenth session, which was scheduled to be held in May 2024. At that session, the Forum would undertake the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests and adopt its quadrennial programme of work for the period 2025–2028. The Forum remained the only intergovernmental body that provided a global framework for forests in support of the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. It stood ready to further promote synergies and coherence on forests and their interlinkages within the United Nations and the Economic and Social Council system, with a view to strengthening integrated policy approaches to shared objectives.

Draft decision: Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its eighteenth session and draft provisional agenda for its nineteenth session

60. **The President** drew attention to the draft decision contained in chapter I, section A, of the report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its eighteenth session ([E/2023/42](#)).

61. *The draft decision was adopted.*

(h) International cooperation in tax matters
(continued) ([E/2023/45](#) and [E/2023/45/Add.1](#))

62. **Ms. Kana** (Chile), Co-Chair of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, speaking via video link, introduced the reports of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters on its twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth sessions ([E/2023/45](#) and [E/2023/45/Add.1](#)). She said that the sessions had been held in a hybrid format. The twenty-fifth session had been held in Geneva, in October 2022, and the twenty-sixth session had been held in New York, in March 2023. The twenty-sixth session had been attended both in person and virtually by a total of 23 Committee members and 560 registered

observers. While the hybrid format was a complex one, it had allowed for very high participation and for contributions by persons who had been unable to travel. The record participation registered at that session reflected the benefits of using a hybrid format, and an increased interest in the work of the Committee. The experience had demonstrated the need to ensure that the rules of procedure of the subsidiary bodies of the Council were adapted to new ways of conducting business across countries and time zones, particularly in respect to voting. Members participating virtually had not been able to vote during the meeting, as voting was only allowed for members attending in person, without the possibility of vote by proxy.

63. The sessions had considered a wide range of issues relating, for example, to guidance products such as the United Nations Model Double Taxation Convention between Developed and Developing Countries, and other guidance in areas including transfer pricing, taxation of extractive industries, environmental taxation, taxation matters relating to the digitalized and globalized economy, digitalization and other opportunities to improve tax administration, increased tax transparency, wealth and solidarity taxes, health taxes, and the relationship between tax, trade and investment agreements. Discussions had consistently referred to the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals in all matters of international tax cooperation, with emphasis on prioritizing action on the Goals in the current socioeconomic context. The members of the Committee clearly understood the role of taxation in supporting the Goals through domestic resource mobilization and in supporting sustainable behaviours among corporate entities and individuals. Accordingly, the Committee had focused its work on areas where taxation could help to achieve the Goals, for instance through health, environmental, wealth and solidarity taxes.

64. The Committee remained committed to integrating Goal-related considerations and perspectives into all of its workstreams and to exploring additional ways of helping developing countries to identify and address not only vulnerabilities, but also opportunities to effectively and efficiently deploy tax measures, with a view to achieving the Goals. The guidance products and capacity-building activities of the Committee remained vital to that end. The need to affirm and support the taxation rights of developing countries was a common thread that ran through the Committee's work, together with the need to promote balanced investment environments, which could contribute significantly to realizing the Goals.

65. In that context, at the twenty-sixth session, the core coordinators of the various subcommittees had presented progress reports on their workstreams and documents, for the Committee's consideration and approval. The secretariat had updated the Committee on capacity-building work, and had sought and received input from its members, who were approaching the halfway mark of their term. The Committee recommended that the Council review and adopt the draft decision contained in chapter I of the report on the twenty-sixth session, which proposed an agenda for its twenty-seventh session to be held in Geneva, from 17 to 20 October 2023.

Draft decision: Venue, dates and provisional agenda of the twenty-seventh session of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters

66. **The President** drew attention to the draft decision contained in chapter I of the report of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters on its twenty-sixth session ([E/2023/45/Add.1](#)).

67. *The draft decision was adopted.*

68. **The President** said that she took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters on its twenty-fifth session, as contained in [E/2023/45](#).

69. *It was so decided.*

(i) Geospatial information (continued) ([E/2023/84](#) and [E/2023/84/Corr.1](#))

70. **Mr. Jaillard** (France), Chair of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, speaking via video link, introduced the report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on its 2023 session ([E/2023/84](#) and [E/2023/84/Corr.1](#)). He said that the report contained decisions on the work done and progress made in the preceding two years, as well as plans for the current intersessional period. While geographical names were necessary for identifying locations and underpinning the collection, management, monitoring and analysis of data in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, their importance was not readily recognized and they were often taken for granted. It was therefore important to increase awareness of and knowledge on the standardization of geographical names. The last biennial session of the Group of Experts had been attended by approximately 220 delegates from 62 countries, including observers and representatives of civil society organization, international organizations, the private sector and academia. At the session, 60 technical papers had been

introduced and discussed, and a procedural report, three recommendations, 22 decisions, and the dates and provisional agenda for the 2025 session had been adopted.

71. The session had focused on the theme "Strengthening relationships, links and connections in geographical names standardization and for sustainable development and pandemic recovery". That theme was aligned with the theme of the high-level political forum and the Group of Experts' Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021–2029. In accordance with one of the recommendations coming out of the Group of Experts' 2019 session, concerning the facilitation of an interactive process for the presentation of country reports, a new national dialogue had been established and conducted. The new approach, which sought to enable Member States to present and share their national experiences in an interesting and beneficial manner, had proven to be successful and interactive, and had contributed to knowledge transfers among Member States. Commonalities had become apparent and conclusions had been drawn on potential opportunities for collaboration in the areas of crowdsourcing data on geographical names and data validation methodologies.

72. In accordance with the recommendations of the Council with respect to collaboration among functional commissions and expert bodies, the Group of Experts continued to strengthen its cooperation with the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management. It had designed and proposed to the latter a collaborative project to develop a compendium of institutional arrangements and operational good practices among national mapping and geospatial agencies and national geographical names authorities. That proposal had been well received at the twelfth session of the Committee of Experts, where eight Member States had indicated their support for the project, for which implementation plans were being formulated. The Group of Experts was also pursuing another collaboration with United Nations Maps, a geospatial initiative seeking to assist United Nations peacekeeping missions by providing topographic maps to support peace and security, navigation and logistics, and help those missions in their tactical and operational activities.

73. The Group of Experts had identified three areas in which it could assist the United Nations system, namely: training in the collection and recording of geographical names; collecting geographical names for the preparation of a set of mutually upgradable standards for recording geographical names; and making national data on geographical names available. It supported further cooperation with the United Nations Global Geospatial

Information Management Academic Network and United Nations Maps, and recognized the importance of its relationships with other organizations, such as the International Cartographic Association, the International Council of Onomastic Sciences and the International Hydrographic Organization. Continued emphasis would be placed on strengthening those relationships and increasing awareness on the importance of the standardization of geographical names, particularly in the areas of cultural heritage and disaster risk management, as well as within the context of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on its 2023 session (E/2023/84 and E/2023/84/Corr.1)

74. **The President** drew attention to the recommendations contained in chapter I, section A, of the report.

Recommendation I: Cooperation with United Nations Maps

Recommendation II: World geographical names database

Recommendation III: Report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on its 2023 session and provisional agenda and dates of its 2025 session

75. *Recommendations I, II and III were adopted.*

(f) Public administration and development
(continued) (E/2023/44 and E/2023/L.20)

Draft resolution E/2023/L.20: Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its twenty-second session

76. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

77. *Draft resolution E/2023/L.20 was adopted.*

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions (continued)

(g) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
(E/2023/43)

78. **Mr. Mejía Montalvo** (Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues), introducing the report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its twenty-second session (E/2023/43), said that the session, which had been held from 17 to 28 April 2023, was the first to have been held entirely in-person since

the COVID-19 pandemic. Several high-level United Nations and international authorities had attended the session, including the Secretary-General, together with representatives of Indigenous Peoples from many Member States. The report of the Permanent Forum contained analyses and recommendations based on the deliberations of its members and valuable contributions from participants and observers. The session had covered the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum's ongoing and future work, and had included interactive dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as a panel discussion on the overarching theme "Indigenous Peoples, human health, planetary and territorial health and climate change: a rights-based approach". That discussion had underscored that it was not possible to separate human health from the health of the planet, and that for Indigenous Peoples, culture and nature were inseparably linked.

79. The planet was suffering from an imbalance, as a consequence of human behaviour, and Indigenous Peoples were the most immediately and drastically affected by the crisis, although their contribution to it had been minimal. The report noted that it was unacceptable that Indigenous leaders and human rights defenders continued to be threatened, harassed and killed for defending their lands. The worsening situation in many countries was alarming, with increased threats, intimidation and hate speech being directed at Indigenous Peoples who were speaking out, including at United Nations meetings. The failure to recognize the existence of Indigenous Peoples was not conducive to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

80. The Permanent Forum welcomed and endorsed general recommendation No. 39 (2022) on the rights of Indigenous women and girls of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which recognized not only the important role of Indigenous women and girls in the preservation of their peoples, lands, territories and culture, but also the discrimination and violence that disproportionately affected them, worldwide. The Permanent Forum would monitor the implementation of general recommendation No. 39, on an annual basis.

81. Member States should support the International Decade of Indigenous Languages and its Global Action Plan in any way possible. The rights of Indigenous Peoples were recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and could not be undermined or diminished by conflation or confusion with those of other categories, such as ethnic minorities, vulnerable populations, civil society

stakeholders or local communities. Accordingly, all Member States and United Nations entities should separate the use of the term “Indigenous Peoples” from that of “local communities”. The draft provisional agenda of the twenty-third session of the Permanent Forum contained the theme identified for that session, namely “Enhancing Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination in the context of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: emphasizing the voice of Indigenous youth”. That central theme was very timely, given the active role that Indigenous youth were playing in global resilience efforts and the contributions of Indigenous Peoples to climate action, peacebuilding and digital cooperation.

82. The Permanent Forum had taken note of the guidance provided by the Council to further the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in its programme of work.

83. **Ms. Widyastuti** (Indonesia) said that notable advancements had been made in recognizing and addressing the rights and concerns of Indigenous Peoples, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Those advancements underscored the commitment of the international community to uphold the fundamental principles of justice, equality and non-discrimination. Her delegation acknowledged the recently adopted twenty-second report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which was a testament to the ongoing commitment to enhance the status and rights of Indigenous Peoples worldwide, who were crucial to the collective pursuit of global peace and sustainable development. Within the framework of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the twenty-third session of the Permanent Forum, the safeguarding of Indigenous Peoples’ rights to cultural heritage, natural resources and meaningful participation in decision-making processes was essential to the collective human rights agenda.

84. Throughout the twenty-second session of the Permanent Forum, her delegation had taken note of several issues that needed to be further addressed for the betterment of the working methods and mechanisms of the Permanent Forum. The transparency and participation mechanisms of Indigenous communities were pertinent, especially in ensuring the genuine representation of Indigenous Peoples within the United Nations system. Furthermore, the members of the Permanent Forum had underscored the significance of balanced representation that included both government bodies and Indigenous Peoples’ organizations, as well as the need to maintain impartiality and uphold the highest

standard of integrity. Individual agendas should not be intermingled with the work of the Permanent Forum. Rather, the focus should be placed on the collective goal of advancing the rights of Indigenous Peoples across all relevant forums. Indonesia remained committed to cooperating with all relevant stakeholders to address those concerns. Collective efforts and sincere dialogue would be critical for realizing the principles enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (E/2023/43)

85. **The President** drew attention to the draft decisions contained in chapter I, section A, of the report.

Draft decision I: International expert group meeting on the theme “Indigenous Peoples in a greening economy”

Draft decision II: Venue and dates of the twenty-third session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Draft decision III: Report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its twenty-second session and provisional agenda of its twenty-third session

86. *Draft decisions I, II and III were adopted.*

87. **Mr. Heartney** (United States of America) said that the statements in the report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues reflected the latter’s position, and not necessarily that of the United States.

(f) Human rights (continued) (E/2023/74)

88. **Ms. Brands Kehris** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Head of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in New York), introducing the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on economic, social and cultural rights (E/2023/74), said that the report addressed the increasingly urgent human rights issue of patents and other pricing aspects of access to medicines, which was a fundamental element of the right to health and critical for the enjoyment of all human rights. Currently, 2 billion people had no access to essential medicines, and were therefore unable to benefit from scientific progress that could improve their health and save their lives. While Governments had a primary duty to respect, protect and fulfil the right to health, the ability to uphold that right depended on equitable access to essential medicines and to the private actors that produced them.

89. When access to innovations that were essential to health and life depended on private sector producers, inevitable tensions arose between the imperative to

uphold human rights for all and the profit-seeking nature of those entities. The trend towards the high pricing of new patented medicines undermined access in both rich and poor countries. Patent protections for new COVID-19 vaccines and advance purchase agreements had generated a windfall for vaccine manufacturers and allowed them to prioritize sales to wealthy countries offering the most profitable terms, even before the vaccines had been approved by regulatory authorities. As a result, low- and middle-income countries had been left behind, in a phenomenon that had been deemed by some as “vaccine nationalism” or “vaccine apartheid”. Pharmaceutical innovation was rooted in the patent system, which often facilitated the creation of effective monopolies on essential medicines. One example of the impact that pharmaceutical companies could have when they freely exercised the power to set their own prices was observed in August 2015, when the price of Daraprim, which was the only drug available to treat toxoplasmosis, had risen by 5,000 percent. In recent years, steep and sometimes unjustified increases in the prices of drugs for treating hepatitis, diabetes and other diseases, had demonstrated that such monopolies effectively excluded those who could not afford to pay.

90. In addition, because of the market-driven research and development incentives that characterized the patent system, investment in health products that did not offer substantial returns or that were deemed to be too costly, had been neglected. The result was a shortage or lack of drugs and therapies needed specifically by women, children and those living with rare diseases or diseases that mainly affected the poor. In many countries, the public sector played a vital role in funding, and a significant share of research and development was financed by taxpayers and conducted through partnerships with academic institutions and research bodies. Without a guarantee that the drugs developed using public funding would be available and affordable, and that the data, knowledge and technologies generated would be shared, rights holders lost the benefit of both their investment and their rights.

91. In the light of the foregoing, the report recommended that the public interest and human rights be ring-fenced using competition law, price control policies, procurement law and other legislative and policy tools. Cooperation among States should be strengthened, particularly in relation to the exchange of technical know-how and data, the effective regulation of business entities involved in producing medicines, and research and development for new drugs, vaccines and diagnostic tools. Furthermore, a collaborative and inclusive network of stakeholders should be established, with expertise in areas relating to access to medicines,

in order to develop practical solutions for properly incentivizing innovations, while avoiding existing inequalities of access. Where public goods or innovations that were essential for life, health and dignity were concerned, there should be no profiteering or speculation. To ensure a fair return on investment and broad and equal access to medicines, new codes of conduct were needed, together with dialogue among all stakeholders, including Governments, the private sector and rights holders.

Agenda item 17: Non-governmental organizations
(continued) (E/2023/32 (Part III); E/2023/L.32)

92. **Mr. Camelli** (Representative of the European Union in its capacity as observer), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova, said that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) played a key role in promoting multilateralism, supporting the implementation of the decisions taken across the United Nations system and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The European Union considered those contributions to be essential and staunchly supported the free and open participation of civil society organizations within and outside of the United Nations.

93. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations bore a high responsibility for the credibility of the United Nations, since its recommendations directly influenced the participation of NGOs in the United Nations system and, in turn, shaped relations between the Organization and civil society. When reviewing applications for consultative status, the Committee should be guided solely by the consideration of the general interest, in accordance with the provisions and spirit of Council resolution 1996/31. The European Union acknowledged that the Council had the final decision-making authority on granting consultative status, which it had exercised in cases where the Committee had failed to fulfil its mandate. Accordingly, it took note of the decision made by the Council, the year before, to grant special consultative status to a number of NGOs, notwithstanding the recommendation made by the Committee.

94. A proposal to grant consultative status to seven NGOs had once again been submitted to the current session of the Council. Each application had been deferred for at least four years, despite the NGO having satisfactorily responded to the Committee’s questions and having engaged with the Committee on its application for consultative status. Regardless of the decision made by the Council on those applications, there was an urgent need to reform the Committee in

order to allow for its more inclusive, effective, fair and transparent functioning, including through the limitation of unjustified deferrals.

95. **Mr. Al-barati** (Observer for Yemen), speaking also on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that, with respect to the application by seven NGOs for consultative status with the Council, the Group was concerned about the implications of the Council's disregard for the recommendations of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. That disregard was particularly troubling in the wake of Council decision 2022/344, which had granted consultative status to six NGOs, and decision 2023/304, which had granted consultative status to nine NGOs, against the recommendations of the Committee. Such decisions established practices that could encourage non-compliance with the application process for consultative status and the provisions of Council resolution 1996/31, and failed to take account of the Committee's recommendations. Moreover, they raised questions concerning the Council's confidence in the impartiality and work of the Committee, which comprised members elected by the Council itself. It was critical to respect the mandate given to the Committee to thoroughly examine all applications and the responsibility of its members to ask relevant questions in that regard. That mandate was particularly important, given the valuable contributions made by NGOs to the work of the United Nations and the achievement of sustainable development.

96. **Mr. Busch** (Observer for Germany) said that NGOs were a part of the fabric of modern societies and often ensured that the perspectives, needs and demands of civil society and marginalized groups were taken into consideration. They therefore played an important role in broadening dialogue and deliberations, and helped to make decisions more legitimate and resilient. Civil society organizations were also an integral part of a participatory and inclusive multi-stakeholder approach and were key for providing feedback. They acted as an intermediary between diverse societies and the multilateral decision-making bodies of the United Nations by bringing the voices of stakeholders and experts directly into negotiations, thereby rendering discussions more fact-based and attuned to realities and needs on the ground. At the same time, NGOs also conveyed the sometimes abstract and remote decision-making at the United Nations level to their own countries or regions and, in so doing, helped to create understanding and possibly acceptance for those decisions.

97. Germany strongly supported the comprehensive participation of civil society organizations in

multilateral processes. However, in recent years, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had unfortunately proven to be an impediment to NGO participation in United Nations bodies, and had repeatedly refused to recommend NGOs for consultative status with the Council, without providing convincing reasons. The Committee had failed to fulfil its function, as outlined in Council resolution 1996/31, thereby making it necessary for scrutiny to be directly exercised by the Council, which had the final say in the matter. The Committee should be reformed so that it could once again play its key role of enabling NGOs to legitimately participate in the deliberations of the Council, its subsidiary bodies and other United Nations forums. In that context, all members of the Council should vote in favour of the proposal to grant consultative status to the seven NGOs.

98. **Ms. Tonon** (Italy) said that civil society had made an essential contribution to the promotion of multilateralism, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the building of trust. In the lead-up to the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, Italy acknowledged the tireless field work of NGOs to eliminate poverty and leave no one behind, while recognizing the interlinkages between sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations bore a high responsibility, as it was tasked with the implementation of the legal framework governing civil society participation in the work of the United Nations. Its functioning, credibility and accountability were crucial for relations between the United Nations and civil society, which should be guided by mutual trust and constructive engagement through transparent, effective and inclusive working modalities. Deferrals should be duly justified and satisfactory responses should be provided to the questions raised by NGOs, with general interest as a guiding principle. Italy attached great importance to ensuring that the Committee fulfilled its mandate, in the spirit of Council resolution 1996/31, and would continue to engage accordingly in its capacity as a member and Vice-Chair of the Council.

99. **Mr. Hakobyan** (Observer for Armenia) said that, as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, Armenia fully supported the inclusive engagement of civil society organizations within the United Nations, as reflected in its position on the modalities of civil society participation in the meetings of the Organization. NGOs were valuable partners across the three pillars of the United Nations and helped to promote the 2030 Agenda at the national, global and regional levels. Addressing evolving contemporary

challenges required a whole-of-society approach and stronger cooperation among Governments and other relevant stakeholders, such as NGOs. The applications for consultative status of some civil society organizations, including Armenian NGOs, had been deferred for several years by the Committee, with no substantial justification. In that context, Armenia supported all efforts that could assist civil society organizations in meeting the criteria outlined by the Council in its resolution 1996/31 to obtain consultative status and offer their contributions to the work of the United Nations.

Draft decision E/2023/L.32: Applications of non-governmental organizations for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

100. **The President** said that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

101. **Ms. Carty** (United States of America), introducing the draft decision, said that her delegation was proud to sponsor the draft decision before the Council, together with more than 32 other cross-regional delegations. The draft decision underscored a deep and abiding commitment to promoting civil society participation in the United Nations, as acknowledged by its Charter. Enabling a diverse range of voices to participate in the United Nations system strengthened the Organization and its Member States, and made them more responsive to their citizens. The list of seven geographically diverse NGOs that was before the Council represented a cross-section of entities, whose work advanced all three pillars of the United Nations. Those organizations were working on a daily basis to keep the public informed, safeguard human rights, defend marginalized populations, conduct critical research and promote justice and accountability, often at personal risk, and deserved to have their voices heard.

102. The NGOs on the list had seen their applications deferred for over four years and had been unfairly targeted for doing their work. Unfortunately, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, of which the United States was a member, had failed once again to fulfil its mandate. At its last session, the Committee had granted accreditation to a mere 33 per cent of the NGO applicants. The list currently before the Council represented only a fraction of the more than 300 NGOs that had seen their applications unfairly deferred for years. The draft decision under consideration was significant because it was a step towards reducing the backlog of NGOs that were patiently waiting to have their voices heard and that had been blocked for political reasons. By supporting the draft decision, the members of the Council would be sending a signal to civil society,

worldwide, that its contribution was valued by their Governments.

103. Together with other Committee members, her delegation had used the same well-established procedure on two previous occasions, and regretted that it needed to continue submitting the draft decision to the Council. However, until it was successful in improving the working methods of the Committee, the United States would continue to support similar action. Since the draft decision would not solve the problems of the Committee, her delegation was committed to working with other likeminded members, members sharing opposing positions and the Council, to ensure that the Committee was empowered to fulfil its important mandate. In the event of a vote, the members of the Council should vote in favour of the draft decision, in accordance with the provisions contained in Council resolution 1996/31, with a view to enabling full the participation of civil society in the United Nations.

104. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Council) said that Iceland and Norway had become sponsors of the draft decision.

105. **The President** said that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft decision contained in document [E/2023/L.32](#).

106. **Ms. Cao Liwen** (China), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that China had consistently supported NGOs in their compliant and orderly participation in the affairs of the United Nations and had earnestly fulfilled its responsibilities and obligations as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. In accordance with relevant Council resolutions and mandates, China supported the granting of consultative status to eligible NGOs, with a view to their contribution to the promotion of healthy interactions with the United Nations. Regrettably, the draft decision before the Council violated the spirit of its resolution 1996/31, ignored the outcome of the Committee's work and was seeking to overrule the Committee's collective decision by forcibly requesting that consultative status be granted to seven NGOs, in yet another demonstration of rule-breaking and double standards.

107. The draft decision was irresponsible and improper. Like most members of the Committee, China had carefully reviewed the documentation submitted by those seven NGOs, as part of the application process, before making an informed and responsible decision. The draft decision had been submitted by a particular country, in an attempt to overturn the consensus reached by the Committee, inviting the question of how the Council could be allowed to overturn the results of the

Committee's informed deliberations and collective decisions, based solely on the names of the organizations. China had on previous occasions pointed out the absurdity of such behaviour, and that the country in question was acting on its own selfish interests, in an attempt to impose its will on the Council.

108. The draft decision was rife with double standards. While a certain country had long been publicizing its support for NGO participation in the United Nations, the list of NGOs reflected a non-transparent selection process with groundless references, and had been selectively drawn up by that individual country for its own political purposes. In fact, some NGOs from developing countries, including China, had seen their applications repeatedly questioned and delayed, and it would be interesting to know why that particular country, which advocated for NGO participation, continued to turn a blind eye to those organizations. Such political manoeuvring and selective behaviour were disgraceful.

109. The draft decision severely undermined democracy and equity. While a particular country encouraged a rules-based approach, in reality, it constantly violated rules and weakened consensus. That country's attempts to overrule Committee decisions through the adoption of a draft decision would open a back door to NGOs, on the sole basis of private preferences. If unchecked, such a movement would compromise Council resolution 1996/31 and cause serious injustice and discrimination against other organizations, especially those from developing countries that had submitted their applications in accordance with the resolution. It would also erode the authority of United Nations bodies and the trust placed in them by those organizations.

110. For the foregoing reasons, China would vote against the draft decision. That vote was not an objection to NGO participation, but rather an objection to political manoeuvring, double standards and attempts to undermine the credibility of the work of United Nations bodies. All members of the Council should vote against the draft decision, in order to safeguard jointly formulated international rules and uphold true multilateralism.

111. **Ms. Arab Bafrani** (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that, worldwide, several civil society organizations were actively working to realize sustainable development, promote multilateralism, eradicate poverty, provide health care to those most in need, promote human rights and dignity, foster cooperation among different cultures and nations, and

help mainstream family-oriented policies and programmes. The Islamic Republic of Iran considered those contributions to be essential and supported civil society participation in the work of the United Nations. It also fully adhered to the intergovernmental nature of the Organization. Her delegation commended the established practice whereby NGOs engaged with the United Nations through the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, which conducted detailed and comprehensive assessments of NGO applications for consultative status. The Committee welcomed in-person discussions of those applications and provided a credible basis for enabling NGOs to participate in the work of the United Nations, taking into account their diverse yet relevant capacities.

112. It was unfortunate that that the Council and its subsidiary bodies continued to be misused, to serve the narrow political interests of certain delegations and undermine the very mandate of the Committee, as contained in Council resolution 1996/31. The selective approach taken by the United States of America and the supporters of its clearly political agenda was extremely disappointing. The platform provided by the Council should not be used to pursue national or politicized objectives. The actions undertaken by the United States undermined the authority of the Committee and gave the impression that NGOs would not be treated equally by Member States, with some NGOs given priority over others. Several applications submitted by NGOs from countries of the global South, including her own country, had been deferred for many years by the United States, under similar circumstances.

113. One such NGO, the Habilian Association, was an Iranian human rights NGO that had been founded by the families of victims of terrorism, with the aim of drawing attention to the fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran faced one of the highest numbers of terror attacks in the world. According to studies conducted by that Association, there had been more than 70,000 casualties resulting from terror attacks across the country. In that specific case, an organization working to combat criminal acts of terrorism had been blocked by the United States. Another Iranian NGO, the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, which was working to help poor and particularly vulnerable people, had also been blocked by the United States, a country that strove to portray itself as the sole defender of NGOs. The applications of both NGOs had been pending for many years, even though they had engaged constructively with the Committee and had demonstrated their capacity and interest in supporting the work of the United Nations. Many other NGOs had been waiting for years to be

accredited and had been repeatedly asked irrelevant questions.

114. Those examples demonstrated that the United States and other Member States that supported such a selective approach were pursuing a policy aimed at serving narrow political interests, at the expense of civil society. Such politicized practices disrupted the normal working of the Council's subsidiary bodies, in similar fashion to the revoking of her country's membership of the Commission on the Status of Women, which it had obtained through a democratic and transparent process. For the organs and bodies of the United Nations to be able to fulfil their mandates, there was a need to strengthen the multilateral system and create an enabling environment. The Islamic Republic of Iran continued to place great importance on the contributions of civil society, including NGOs, to the work of the United Nations. Accordingly, it strongly objected to any measures that undermined the Committee's role as a platform for ensuring the credible contributions of those NGOs.

115. **Mr. Lagatie** (Belgium), making a general statement before the voting, said that the meaningful participation of NGOs in the work of the United Nations was necessary for effective and legitimate multilateralism, since it provided invaluable expertise and enriched debates by giving a voice to those working on the ground. Unfortunately, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had not been fulfilling its mandate. Belgium regretted the many obstacles faced by eligible NGOs, such as irrelevant and repetitive questions, which ultimately led to the deferral of decisions on their applications. Initiatives to reform the Committee and increase its transparency, efficiency and accountability had been proposed, to no avail. Reform was therefore overdue, and his delegation remained committed to working with all members of the Council and of the Committee itself, in that regard.

116. Pending such reform, Belgium welcomed initiatives such as the draft decision before the Council, which sought to grant consultative status to seven eligible and credible NGOs. They worked in different regions, in key areas including international law, drug policy, human rights and combating transnational organized crime, and their contributions would enhance the work of the United Nations across its three pillars. All of the NGOs in question had volunteered for their applications to be put to a vote. As the parent body of the Committee, the Council was the final decision-making authority, and it must discharge itself of that important responsibility, as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations. Urgent action was needed to grant consultative status to those NGOs and enable them to

contribute to the work of the Organization. Belgium would vote in favour of the draft decision and urged all members of the Council to do the same.

117. **Mr. Simpson** (New Zealand), making a general statement before the voting, said that civil society played a valuable role in the work of the United Nations, and his delegation strongly supported the expansion of opportunities for civil society to participate in its deliberations. Civil society organizations had new ideas and diverse viewpoints and often represented communities with an important stake in the issues under discussion. They often brought considerable expertise to the deliberations of the United Nations, played an active role in the implementation of its decisions and improved the quality, credibility and impact of its work. For those reasons, their voices deserved to be heard.

118. New Zealand was concerned that some deliberations within the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had not been consistent with the mandate given to it by the Council or with the contribution made by civil society. His delegation was troubled by ongoing reports of applications for consultative status being unduly delayed with frivolous and often repetitive questions and requests, or being continuously deferred without any credible or clear rationale. Both the Council and those NGOs deserved better. For the foregoing reasons, New Zealand would vote in favour of the draft decision to accredit the organizations in question, in keeping with its long-standing support for NGO access at the United Nations, and encouraged other members to do the same.

119. **Ms. Banaken Elel** (Cameroon), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that, as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, Cameroon had taken part in the deliberations on the granting of consultative status to the seven NGOs in question. Her delegation had supported the Committee's decision to recommend that the Council refrain from granting consultative status to those NGOs. Cameroon commended the contribution made by civil society organizations to the work of the United Nations and underscored the importance of the work done by the Committee, which had been mandated by the Council to assess the credibility of the organizations seeking to collaborate with the Organization. Such a task often required a series of question-and-answer sessions that could become protracted. While that practice could seem tiresome and give rise to a sense of impatience, it was indispensable for both the NGOs under consideration and the Committee. For that reason, her delegation had voted against all of the applications for consultative status that had been put to a vote at the most recent meeting of the

Committee. That vote did not reflect an opposition to the NGOs under consideration, or to NGO participation in general. Rather, it was a vote in favour of the preservation of the Committee's practices and procedures.

120. In the process for accrediting NGOs, the main concern should not be the duration of the review period, or the reduction of the number of pending applications, but rather the Committee's thoroughness in its assessment of the NGOs and the merits of their applications. The practices and procedures of the Committee had been specifically designed for that purpose. Her delegation's vote had sought to preserve the Committee's working methods, the consensus-based nature of its decisions and its mandate, as defined by Council resolution 1996/31. Cameroon considered that the members of the Council that were not members of the Committee did not have access to the applications submitted by NGOs. It would therefore be difficult for them to judge the content of those applications. It was important for the Council to trust its subsidiary bodies and refrain from undermining the authority and work of its technical committees, including that of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. For the foregoing reasons, Cameroon would maintain the position adopted at the last session of the Committee and vote against the draft decision.

121. **Ms. Ochoa Espinales** (Observer for Nicaragua), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that, as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, Nicaragua placed great importance in its mandate, as contained in Council resolution 1996/31, which regulated the proper process for granting consultative status to NGOs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Nicaragua categorically rejected any unilateral, selective and politicized draft decision presented by a single delegation, which did not help to maintain and preserve the spirit of consensus within the Committee. There was a need for dialogue and consultation among all the members of the Committee, to better fulfil the mandate given to them. The unilateral call for a vote or submission of a draft decision to grant consultative status to certain NGOs set a bad precedent for the Committee's working methods and for the Council itself. It also undermined the fundamental role of the Committee, which was the decision-making authority for such matters, and reflected a selective focus on granting consultative status to NGOs that had not yet responded to questions about their activities in the countries in which they operated.

122. Nicaragua considered that such a selective focus did not do justice to the hundreds of other NGO

applicants. In addition, it negatively affected the credibility of the United Nations, which was being used to serve the interest of Western countries. Her country remained committed to working with all other members of the Committee to make further progress on fulfilling its mandate and support the granting of consultative status to NGOs within the framework established by the Council in its resolution 1996/31 and in strict accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Nicaragua urged all members of the Council to vote against the draft decision.

123. **Ms. Ali** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that NGOs made important contributions to environmental, social, advocacy and human rights work. They also played a key role in the promotion of social and political changes, as they helped to develop societies, improve communities and encourage citizen participation. Her delegation acknowledged the work of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in granting consultative status to applicant NGOs, in accordance with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It should be recalled that those NGOs were required to demonstrate that they were making substantive and sustained contributions to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations, in their relevant areas. The Committee was exercising due diligence in making sure that every NGO applying for consultative status with the Council had met the required criteria.

124. The Syrian Arab Republic believed that the submission of the draft decision to the Council was a counterproductive approach that undermined the authority of the Committee and the hard work of its members. It also overburdened the Council with duties that should be carried out by its subsidiary body. The NGOs listed in the draft decision had clearly not met the Committee's requirements and should not be accorded any preferential treatment. The draft decision was not a step forward in enhancing the work of the Committee, but rather a setback characterized by selectivity, discrimination and double standards, where the applications of some NGOs were prioritized over those of others. That practice should not be normalized within the Committee. Her delegation called on those members that were prioritizing certain NGOs to abide by Council resolution 1966/31, which clearly set out the principles to be applied in the establishment of consultative relations.

125. **Mr. Setia** (India), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his country had an active, vibrant and pluralistic civil society and therefore attached importance to the work of civil society

organizations towards furthering the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting human rights. India supported an inclusive approach to the participation of civil society in the work of the United Nations, in line with Council resolution 1996/31. As a specialized intergovernmental body, the Committee on Non-governmental Organizations was mandated to assess the credibility of each application for consultative status and seek clarifications with a view to making well-considered recommendations to the Council. Performing that function was the Committee's inherent right. Throughout its work, the Committee followed transparent processes, during which its meetings were open to in-person participation by representatives of civil society organizations and telecast live on the United Nations Web TV. Representatives of applicant NGOs were given the opportunity to respond to questions raised by the Committee, in interactive question-and-answer sessions, with the aim of building on a constructive dialogue and providing the information required by the Committee to recommend accreditation.

126. In that context, India strongly supported consensus within the Committee and had therefore voted against the applications submitted by the seven NGOs in question at the Committee's 2023 resumed session. That vote did not reflect a position on the work of those NGOs, but was based on a principled and consistent position on the procedure followed by the Committee. The draft decision sought to overturn the considered decision already taken by the Committee and, in so doing, would undermine its functioning, challenge its competence and circumvent established procedures. It did not provide any opportunity to consider the merits of each application or assess the additional documentation and information sought by the Committee during the review process, thereby rendering it impossible for the Council to objectively evaluate and decide on the applications.

127. His delegation had taken note of the so-called criteria for selecting NGOs from the list, but did not support the cherry-picking approach. If any such criteria were to be developed, the Committee would be the proper platform for doing so, following open, transparent and intergovernmental consultations. India wished to uphold the intergovernmental nature of the decisions taken by specialized bodies and the established procedures and practices of the Committee. It would therefore vote against the draft decision.

128. **Ms. White** (United Kingdom), making a general statement before the voting, said that her delegation welcomed the submission by the United States of a draft decision aimed at providing accreditation to seven

legitimate NGOs that had faced repeated arbitrary deferrals, for several years, owing to the inefficient working methods of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. Those organizations had continuously provided adequate answers to the often repetitive questions. While the Committee did allow for such arbitrary and unilateral deferrals, it also allowed any member to put any application to a vote. For that reason, the United Kingdom had supported each of the NGO applications before the Committee and had called for a vote on the Bar Human Rights Committee, a United Kingdom-based NGO that was among the seven listed in the draft decision.

129. The detailed information circulated to members in advance of the current session would have demonstrated that all seven NGOs were legitimate, in accordance with the criteria contained in Council resolution 1996/31. In fact, over the years of review, there had been no indication that those NGOs did not meet the criteria. In the light of the misinformation circulating among Committee members, it should be noted that the submission of the draft decision was not an attempt to bypass the Committee, as it was provided for in its rules and procedures. The Council was the parent body of the Committee and therefore governed its working methods. The Committee made recommendations on accreditation and the Council took decisions on whether or not it would follow those recommendations. Over the last three decades, members of the Council had taken similar action on several occasions.

130. Civil society voices were essential for the work of the United Nations and played a critical role in delivering vital services and creating stable and prosperous societies. The Committee had an obligation to fairly consider the applications by civil society organizations for accreditation. Members should therefore vote in support of the draft decision.

131. **The representative of Mexico**, speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that her delegation commended the delegation of the United States for the submission of the draft decision. Civil society organizations played a relevant and fundamental role, provided valuable information and analyses and raised public awareness on matters of global interest. They also helped to identify solutions to complex challenges and functioned as guarantors of accountability. In that regard, the substantiated and regulated participation of civil society organizations was vital for enriching intergovernmental discussions. The link between civil society and the work of the Council and its subsidiary organs was critical for strengthening international cooperation and multilateralism. Mexico was committed to a substantive

and comprehensive intergovernmental approach to ensuring the participation of multiple parties and defining solutions to common issues. As part of effective renewed multilateralism, various perspectives should be taken into account in all collective action.

132. Mexico had noted that the Committee might have occasionally misused its mandate by asking questions of organizations in a repetitive fashion, despite appropriate responses by those organizations, which had shown a clear interest in the work of the Council. It was not right for deferrals to go on indefinitely for no substantive reason. There was a need for clear and consistent criteria to avoid unsubstantiated deferrals in the future. The NGOs listed in the draft decision were just a sample of the many organizations that could be granted consultative status with the Council. For better results, a long-term solution was necessary, together with a change of behaviour. For the foregoing reasons, Mexico called for a comprehensive reform of the Committee, aimed at making the process of granting consultative status more effective, with clearly defined and consistent objectives. Such reform would give rise to more equitable and expeditious assessments, thereby enabling NGOs to make a greater contribution to the work of the United Nations. All members of the Committee should facilitate the participation of NGOs by granting consultative status on the basis of rules and procedures, and by responsibly using the question-and-answer mechanism.

133. Her delegation would vote in favour of the draft decision, because it was important to move forward towards including civil society in the deliberations of the Organization. All delegations committed to inclusive and meaningful participation for the strengthening of multilateralism should support the draft decision.

134. **Mr. Kim Nam Hyok** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that many NGOs and civil society organizations played an important role in the economic, social, human rights and other sectors, and actively participated in the work of the United Nations. His delegation considered that NGOs should only be granted consultative status through the established procedure for consideration and decision by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. As a subsidiary body of the Council, that Committee was mandated to assess and determine the criteria for granting consultative status to qualified NGOs, whose activities were aligned with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and with Council resolution 1996/31. All members of the Committee should fulfil their responsibilities by considering all NGO applications for

consultative status in a transparent, objective and impartial manner, and by fully respecting the authority and mandate of the Committee.

135. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was concerned that the draft decision completely disregarded the established practices and working methods of the Committee, in an attempt to forcibly overturn the latter's decisions. That unacceptable approach undermined the mandate of the Committee and created division and confrontation among Member States, thereby eroding the trust placed in the United Nations. That politicized and selective approach should be rejected. By voting against the draft decision members would show their commitment to respecting all the mandates, principles and norms of the United Nations system. His delegation therefore called upon all members to reject and vote against the draft decision.

136. **The representative of Japan**, speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his delegation supported the draft decision to accredit seven reliable NGOs. The views and contributions of credible NGOs and civil society stakeholders were indispensable for advancing the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its three pillars. The participation of diverse strata of society was extremely important. By articulating the needs and interests of different people, reliable NGOs and civil society organizations had often played an integral role in ensuring that discussions within the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and the Third Committee were relevant to people's lives. However, despite their significant contributions and vital roles, credible NGOs were insufficiently recognized and to a certain extent, marginalized. Credible NGOs were not the enemies of the United Nations, but rather its good friends and supporters, whose engagement should be secured. Japan had high expectations for increased, more appropriate and legitimate NGO participation in the work of the Organization, and would vote in favour of the draft decision.

137. **Ms. Rizk** (Observer for Egypt), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that the draft decision under consideration posed a serious institutional challenge, as it pointed to a recurrent trend that did not aim to support the efforts of NGOs or their contribution to the work of the United Nations system. Instead, the draft decision sought to subvert the work of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and was a clear attempt to slowly undermine the Committee and its relevance. Based on a collective recognition of the need to ensure due process in governing the participation of NGOs, the Council had established the Committee in 1946, for that purpose, and

mandated it to determine whether NGOs seeking to participate in the work of the United Nations met the established eligibility criteria for accreditation. That determination was made through the detailed consideration of applications, dialogue and requests for relevant additional information.

138. The proposed draft decision was a direct attack on the Committee that contradicted with the latter's established mandate and sought to circumvent its eligibility criteria by arbitrarily and selectively granting accreditation to NGOs that had not met those criteria. That approach went against the principles of multilateralism. Egypt supported and recognized the role of civil society organizations as advisers, actors on the ground and partners that worked with Governments to fulfil obligations in the economic, social and human rights sectors.

139. **Mr. Chumakov** (Observer for the Russian Federation), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that, once again, a decision was being imposed by one group of countries, marking a clear trend whereby that group was seeking to destroy the authority of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. The first action by that group had been to impose the participation of NGOs in meetings of the General Assembly and request that decisions concerning their participation be taken exclusively by the General Assembly. Such a practice effectively prevented the application of any criteria governing NGO participation and showed clear disdain for the processes of the Committee. There were different type of NGOs. While some NGOs had constructive agendas, others had destructive intentions and, instead of adopting independent positions and fulfilling their role to promote balanced discussions, helped to introduce the positions of the countries of the global North into the deliberations of the United Nations, for monetary gain. That practice undermined the authority of the Committee. Russia therefore joined with those delegations that had objected to the draft decision and considered it to be unjustified.

140. *A recorded vote was taken on the draft decision contained in document E/2023/L.32.*

In favour:

Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, France, Guatemala, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against:

Cameroon, China, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Mauritius, Nigeria, Oman, Tunisia, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Argentina, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Equatorial Guinea, Greece, Israel, Madagascar, Qatar, Solomon Islands.

141. *The draft decision was adopted by 24 votes to 11, with 12 abstentions.*

142. **Ms. Gomes** (Brazil) said that Brazil welcomed civil society participation within the United Nations. Her delegation had abstained from voting, not because it had a substantive reservation concerning NGOs, but because it opposed the imposition of restrictions on their accreditation that were not based on the analysis of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. Brazil supported the terms of Council resolution 1996/31 and the parameters and criteria defined therein for the granting of consultative status with the Council. With respect to the specific recommendations of the Committee, the excessive deferrals of NGO applications and, in particular, those of organizations dedicated to issues such as human rights, gender equality, women's empowerment and sexual and reproductive health and rights, were a cause for concern. Brazil favoured a systemic solution to the situation, which would require improved procedures within the Council and the Committee. There was a need to advance discussions on limiting the time required by the Committee for reviewing NGO applications, in order to comply with the spirit of paragraph 61 (b) of resolution 1996/31.

143. Brazil supported greater transparency and civil society participation in the meetings of the Committee, including through the implementation of measures to enhance regional balance. For greater transparency, her delegation requested the publication of a list of the NGOs requesting consultative status and the number of sessions for which their respective applications had been under review, after each session of the Committee. For increased civil society participation, Brazil recommended a greater number of meetings between the Committee and civil society representatives, before each session of the Council, as provided for in paragraph 61 (a) of resolution 1996/31. NGOs seeking accreditation should be allowed to virtually attend the sessions of the Committee, in order to reduce costs and logistical challenges for NGOs from the global South.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.