



General Assembly

Seventy-third session

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Official Records

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 140 (continued)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/73/722/Add.2)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before proceeding to the items on our agenda, in keeping with established practice, I would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/73/722/Add.2, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/73/722/Add.1, the Plurinational State of Bolivia has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes due note of the information contained in document A/73/722/Add.2?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33

The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict

Note verbale dated 18 January 2019 from the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/73/720)

Draft resolution (A/73/L.75)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Romania to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.75.

Mr. Jinga (Romania): I see there is not a big crowd in the Hall, probably because of the cold outside. Those who were brave enough to come have done so for a good cause.

I have the great pleasure to introduce today draft resolution A/73/L.75, entitled “The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts”, on behalf of the European Union (EU), the outgoing Chair of the Kimberley Process, in Romania’s current role as President of the Council of the European Union.

The draft resolution welcomes the progress made by the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme in severing the links between the diamond trade and conflict. It aims at intensifying that work and aligning it with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I would like to congratulate the European Union and the European Commission on their chairmanship of the Kimberley Process. The European Union was at the forefront of the Kimberley Process at its inception and will continue to do its utmost to ensure that the Kimberley Process continues to fulfil its role as a unique tool for conflict prevention and a catalyst for good governance and transparency in natural-resource management.

The Kimberley Process was established by the United Nations in 2003 to prevent conflict diamonds from entering the mainstream market. The Certification Scheme has made a valuable contribution to international security, development and human rights.

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The global diamond trade was very different 16 years ago than it is today. Diamond-rich areas in some parts of the world had fallen under the control of rebel movements, which used them to fund their activities and fuel devastating conflicts. At the other end of the supply chain, customers had little to no way of knowing where the diamonds had originated. The Kimberley Process, a joint initiative of Governments, civil society and industry, has transformed that situation. It has cut the flow of diamonds to insurgencies and rebel groups, raised awareness among consumers and contributed to safeguarding the legitimate diamond trade, thereby improving the livelihoods of those relying on it to feed and educate their families.

Despite those accomplishments, there remains a sense of urgency in aligning the diamond industry with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to thereby contribute to sustaining peace. Conflict-free diamonds bring the world one step closer to ending poverty and ensuring prosperity. We must work towards a market free from human rights abuses and forced labour.

This draft resolution is an important step forward for the Kimberley Process. It contributes to the broader United Nations agenda by encouraging further strengthening of the Kimberley Process, enhancing its effectiveness in addressing challenges and ensuring that it remains relevant for the future. The draft resolution also encourages further exploring and advancing the ways by which the Kimberley Process contributes to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, international peace and security, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The EU chairmanship delivered progress on all of its priorities for the Kimberley Process — ensuring that the Process remained fit for purpose through reform; reinforcing its unique tripartite structure of Governments, industry and civil society; strengthening its implementation and effectiveness; and focusing on human conditions in mining and the prosperity of producing communities.

The draft resolution recalls the commitment of the Kimberley Process to the reform and review, and in particular how to strengthen the scope of the Process. It notes that the Ad Hoc Committee on Review and Reform will continue its work in the areas of consolidating the core document, strengthening the

peer-review mechanism and establishing a permanent secretariat and, potentially, an assistance fund.

The EU chairmanship worked towards consolidating the effectiveness of the mechanism for peacebuilding, conflict prevention and the promotion of in-country due diligence. It also worked to further reinforce cooperation among Governments, the diamond industry and civil society organizations.

While placing special emphasis on local communities and how diamonds can lift them out of poverty, the EU Chair also focused on promoting partnerships and cooperation between Governments and local communities and between the private sector and civil society in order to make sure that diamonds are a source of sustainable growth instead of financing wars. Romania, together with the other 27 States members of the European Union, works to ensure that natural resources serve local communities, not private armies and criminal groups.

I take this opportunity to wish the best of luck to India as incoming Chair of the Kimberly Process, the Russian Federation as Vice-Chair for 2019 and Chair for 2020, and Botswana as Vice-Chair for 2020 and Chair for 2021.

From blood diamonds to peace diamonds, I count on the members of the General Assembly to adopt this draft resolution by consensus today.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Hardeman (European Union): As Chair of the Kimberley Process for 2018, I have the honour today to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

The European Union has been at the forefront of the Kimberley Process from the very beginning. Since the start, the European Union has played an active role in the development of this unique global partnership to stop conflict diamonds, underpinned by the United Nations. The Kimberley Process came about as a result of concerted action by Governments, industry and civil society. Its establishment followed a call by the General Assembly.

The European Union is proud of what has been achieved since the Kimberley Process was launched, just over 15 years ago. The process has contributed decisively to ending the trade in blood diamonds, which

fuelled several violent conflicts in the late 1990s. The share of what can be defined as conflict diamonds has decreased since 2003, from approximately 15 per cent to less than 1 per cent today. That is significant. These are not just figures; for several countries and communities the Kimberley Process has made the difference between life and death, between war and peace.

This joint effort to ensure that peace diamonds benefit communities, not militias, has continued to attract new participants. Most recently, the Republic of Gabon joined the Process, and still more countries have applied to join.

As Chair of the Kimberley Process last year, the European Union worked to ensure that the Kimberley Process delivers. The European Union also sought to ensure that the Kimberley Process remained equipped to address today's challenges, including those resulting from instability and conflict, and that the Process remained an effective instrument for peace and prosperity, thereby contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

One of the priorities of our chairmanship was to further strengthen the tripartite structure of Governments, civil society and industry, which is the backbone of the Kimberley Process. That tripartite relationship is reinvigorated and increasingly active today.

As Chair, the European Union devoted considerable attention to sustainability and responsibility in artisanal and small-scale mining, in keeping with our commitment to the implementation of the Brussels Declaration on Internal Controls of Participants with Rough Diamond Trading and Manufacturing, the Moscow Declaration on Improving Internal Controls over Alluvial Diamond Production and the Washington Declaration on Integrating Development of Artisanal and Small-Scale Diamond Mining with Kimberley Process Implementation.

The European Union continues to encourage regional approaches to addressing challenges of compliance, building on the experience of the Mano River Union. We welcome the efforts to develop a similar approach in the Central African region. Transparency and accountability of the rough diamond supply chain are paramount to ensuring a responsible approach to sourcing rough diamonds. The European Union supports the continued and strengthened commitment of the Government of the Central African Republic

to working collaboratively with the monitoring team in order to ensure the traceability of rough diamond shipments from compliant zones.

Since its establishment, in 2003, the Kimberley Process has made a real difference, but much more needs to be done. A sense of urgency remains. The European Union strongly believes that the Process must continue to evolve so that it remains fit for purpose in future. If we are faithful to the Kimberley Process, we must act on those challenges now.

That is why in 2018 the European Union made the review and reform process of the Kimberley Process the centrepiece of its chairmanship, while assuming the role of honest broker in moving the third reform cycle forward. That is also why the European Union launched a debate on the scope of the Kimberley Process. That debate must reach a positive conclusion in 2019. To that end, the EU will contribute actively to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Review and Reform, now under the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of Angola and Canada, respectively, and will work closely with India as Chair of the Kimberley Process for 2019 and with the Russian Federation as the 2019 Vice-Chair.

The Kimberley Process stands out as an example of the positive change the international community can bring about when we work together towards a common objective. It stands out, as well, as a practical example of rules-based multilateralism that has had a real impact on the lives of men and women, of girls and boys and of entire communities across the globe.

The European Union will continue to strive for the Kimberley Process to carry on fulfilling its role as a unique tool for conflict prevention, a catalyst for good governance and transparency in natural-resources management and an instrument for development, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The European Union looks forward to working closely with India as the 2019 Kimberley Process Chair, with the Russian Federation as Vice-Chair and with all participants and observers to ensure that an enhanced Kimberley Process can face up to new challenges, prevent conflict and create opportunities for a better life and a better world. If we work together, we can and will deliver.

Ms. Fisher-Tsin (Israel): I would like to convey the delegation of Israel's sincere gratitude to the European Union for serving as Chair of the Kimberley Process

for 2018 and for its leadership role in facilitating draft resolution A/73/L.75. We welcome India as the new Chair for 2019 and look forward to continuing the ground-breaking work of the Kimberley Process as a model for multilateralism at its finest.

A group of African diamond-producing countries put forth an initiative in 2003 that would change the diamond industry forever. Today, 16 years later, 81 nations have committed to a measure that has made 99.8 per cent of the world's diamonds conflict-free. The Kimberley Process is proof that the right mix of cooperation, determination and commitment can solve this complex problem, save countless lives and improve the well-being of those dependent upon the diamond trade to make a living. For that we should be proud. The legitimate trade in diamonds, the success of which can be largely attributed to the Kimberley Process, is critical for economic growth, social development and the eradication of poverty. As such, Israel commends the efforts made to tie the Kimberley Process to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Israel was one of the first countries to play a part in establishing the Kimberley Process, and the first country to issue a certificate when the Process went into effect in 2003. Israel pioneered harnessing technology to aid the process. It has mandated that diamond imports be fully computerized, opened at delivery and examined at customs with the minimum possible margin of error.

Israel was also among the first nations to look into harnessing blockchain technology for the maintenance and development of the ever-increasing regulatory measures designed to best uphold the process. Our control measures and regulations form a highly secure environment for the Kimberley Process to operate most effectively. Israel went through its peer review in 2017, passing with flying colours. In the findings of the review we were praised not only for meeting the minimum standards of the Kimberley Process and for being in full compliance, but particularly for our strict auditing processes, data organization and uniform enforcement of the Kimberley Process nationwide. Members of the Israel Diamond Exchange are required to abide by the recently adopted ethical code of conduct, which stresses integrity, fairness, accountability, tradition, human rights, the rule of law and other principles to ensure fair and moral business practices.

The legitimate diamond industry today employs almost 40,000 people in Southern Africa alone.

Its revenues generate substantial funding for HIV prevention, detection and treatment services in Africa and help countless young boys and girls gain access to better education.

However, we cannot forget that, despite the overwhelming good the Kimberley Process has done, it is not a perfect system. Still, 0.2 per cent of diamonds worldwide are conflict diamonds, linked directly to armed conflict and the trampling of human rights. The international community must do everything in its power to secure the remaining 0.2 per cent of diamonds within the boundaries of the Kimberley Process.

Israel attaches great importance to the peer-review mechanism and supports the establishment of a multi-donor fund and the creation of a new code for international customs controls for synthetic diamonds. As a member of all Kimberley Process subcommittees, Israel is ready to take a leading role in increasing the impact of the Kimberley Process as it relates to stability and sustainability across diamond-producing States. By sharing our knowledge, expertise and strategies, Israel looks forward to making a difference until every last diamond on Earth is certified and every civilian in the process is safe.

Mr. Kelapile (Botswana): At the outset, our delegation joins others in thanking you, Madam President, for convening this annual briefing on the Kimberley Process under the theme "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts". We also express our sincere appreciation to the delegation of the European Union (EU) for its able stewardship of the Kimberley Process in 2018. Indeed, during its tenure the Kimberley Process held two main successful sessions — the intercessional and plenary meetings — through which the 2018 Kimberley Process final communiqué was adopted by the 55 participants representing 82 countries, including the 28 States members of the European Union. We therefore commend the European Union, as outgoing Chair, for presenting the 2018 implementation report (see A/73/720), and Romania for introducing draft resolution A/73/L.75.

As both the report and the draft resolution before us emphasize, the Kimberley Process has made great strides over the past 16 years, including achieving the broadest possible participation in the Certificate

Scheme. Since its establishment, in 2003, conflict diamonds have dropped from 15 per cent to less than 1 per cent as a proportion of the global trade in rough diamonds. It was this organ, the General Assembly, that supported the call by the diamond industry, especially African producing States, to launch an international trading regime that would monitor and regulate the trade in rough diamonds, hence the gradual reduction in conflict diamonds that we witness today.

Through the important draft resolution that we will adopt today, the United Nations will once again confirm the importance of the diamond sector as a catalyst for promoting economic and social development, which are necessary for poverty reduction and addressing inequalities in our countries.

The Assembly has noted the positive benefits of the legitimate diamond trade to producing countries, including transparency and accountability, and the contribution the diamond sector continues to make to the economies of producing, exporting and importing States. It has therefore underlined the need for international action with regard to the ethical exploitation, sale and trade in diamonds.

The draft resolution also encourages further strengthening of the Kimberley Process to enhance its effectiveness in addressing the challenges to the diamond industry and its implications for the lives of people in the communities that should benefit from the associated gains. That includes addressing instability, preventing conflict and ensuring that the Kimberley Process remains relevant in contributing to sustainable development, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Also crucial to note is the commitment of the Kimberley Process members to continuing discussions on reform and review, as noted by the Ad Hoc Committee on Review and Reform, which will continue consultations on the areas of consolidation of the core document and strengthening of the peer review mechanism, the establishment of the permanent secretariat and the multi-donor fund and how to strengthen the scope of the Kimberley Process. Furthermore, our delegation is pleased that the draft resolution also calls for efforts to enhance cooperation and to provide assistance to diamond-producing countries, including through the sharing of best practices, capacity-building and required compliance with the Kimberley Process standards, rules and procedures, as well as the Certification Scheme.

There is no doubt that the Kimberley Process is a truly unique multilateral initiative that has brought together key stakeholders — such as Governments, the diamond industry and civil society — in a concerted effort to curb the flow of illicit and conflict diamonds to the legitimate diamond market. The tripartite nature of the Kimberley Process continues to be the main source of strength of its Certification Scheme. In that regard, we have good reason to jealously guard this multi-stakeholder partnership, which remains one of the best examples of a United Nations-led initiative for a common endeavour. It is for that very reason that the Chairs of the Kimberley Process are mandated by the General Assembly to brief it annually on the state of the diamond industry and compliance by Member States.

Beyond enabling socioeconomic development for the benefit of millions of our peoples, the combined efforts of the Kimberley Process and the United Nations have seen the settlement of intractable conflicts and the consolidation of peace in several African countries. It is our fervent hope that soon the entire Central African Republic will also be declared a full green zone exporting State so that its people can also enjoy the fruits and positive dividends of the minerals sector. We therefore look forward to seeing the Central African Republic implement its post-sanctions strategy. Botswana is ready to contribute to that effort, which is also crucial to the neighbouring countries.

The continued success of the Kimberley Process is important and confirms what can be accomplished when global commitment is matched with global action. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme has a direct impact on the effective mobilization of resources to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1459 (2003) has significantly reduced the trade in conflict diamonds for many Member States, thereby enabling them to use the economic gains to raise the living standards of their people.

For countries like our own, Botswana, whose diamond revenues have always been channelled towards development purposes, the Kimberley Process has enabled us to protect the integrity and reputation of our most valued commodity, diamonds. As the world's leading diamond producer by value, it goes without saying that diamonds, which account for the larger part of our gross domestic product, are unquestionably the mainstay of Botswana's development agenda. As Botswana's former President Mogae once said when

presenting the Kimberley Process report to the General Assembly a decade ago in his capacity as the then Chair of the Process,

“For our people in Botswana, every diamond bought means food on the table, better living conditions, better health care, safe drinking water, more roads and much, much more.”

In short, for Botswana, diamonds are for development, and we aspire to see the same for all producing Member States. Through sound policies, our Government has successfully ensured that the proceeds from diamond sales contribute to the implementation of our successive national development plans and national visions, including our Vision 2036. Through our national road map, we are equally committed to applying those gains to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union’s Agenda 2063, all of which Botswana fully subscribes to. We encourage all the members of the Kimberley Process to adhere to high standards, which includes putting in place enabling national legislation and competent institutions, as well as stringent internal controls to ensure transparency and to facilitate the exchange of statistical data.

Based on its development success story, Botswana stands ready to share lessons, experiences and best practices with other mineral-producing countries, especially those emerging from conflict situations. In that regard, we support the African Union’s Africa Mining Vision, adopted in 2009, and its ongoing transition, and hope that it will serve as a pivotal common platform for African countries to work together based on a shared vision of the Africa we want.

In conclusion, we once more underscore that through the Kimberley Process and the firm commitment of the General Assembly, we can enhance our prospects of achieving peace and security and the commitments set out in the Organization’s 2030 Agenda, as well as the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and associated initiatives, such as the Africa Mining Vision.

We reaffirm Botswana’s commitment to the Kimberley Process initiative. Moving forward, we take this opportunity to welcome the selection of India as Chair of the Kimberley Process for 2019 and the Russian Federation as Vice-Chair for 2019 and subsequent Chair for 2020. We assure them of our full cooperation and support during their tenure. My country, Botswana,

will be ready to serve as Vice-Chair for 2020 and Chair for 2021.

Mrs. Alhefeiti (United Arab Emirates): I take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this plenary meeting on agenda item 33, “The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict”.

At the outset, I would like to express my delegation’s appreciation to the European Union, the outgoing Chair of the Kimberley Process, for its distinguished leadership and hard work in facilitating and coordinating the negotiations on draft resolution A/73/L.75, which we will adopt today.

The Kimberley Process is one of the most successful partnerships between Governments, the private sector and civil society to ensure that blood diamonds are not entered or involved in the legitimate trade of diamonds. The challenges are not limited to the blood diamond trade, but make the diamond trade stronger and more sustainable.

During its remarkable chairmanship in 2016, the United Arab Emirates initiated a discussion on establishing a permanent secretariat for the Kimberley Process, among other initiatives. We are pleased to see the commitment that the members of the group have shown on finding a way forward for establishing a permanent secretariat, which will spare them all the various structural deficiencies that result from the lack of a permanent secretariat equipped with professional skills and resources that will outlive the rotation of country Chairs. We should accelerate our efforts to achieve greater quality and effectiveness so as to ensure the Kimberley Process’s efficiency and success.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We are very grateful that this initiative is recognized in the draft resolution and will be discussed further under the incoming Chair. In that regard, on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, I would like to congratulate India and the Russian Federation, the Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, of the Kimberley Process for 2019.

Ms. Bird (Australia): I would first like to thank the European Union for its leadership of the Kimberley Process as Chair in 2018, and in particular for its commitment to taking forward the targeted reform agenda on which the Kimberley Process agreed at the Brisbane plenary in 2017. We thank the European

Union for leading the process of revising the core document. Australia also welcomes India to the role of Chair of the Kimberley Process in 2019 and looks forward to working with it to strengthen the Kimberley Process so that it remains relevant in an era of new challenges to the modern diamond industry, including artisanal and alluvial mining and synthetic diamonds. We acknowledge the significant contribution of all stakeholders, including those that serve on committees. We welcome the extension of the Ad Hoc Committee on Review and Reform for a further year and thank India for chairing it in 2018.

Australia is honoured to have chaired the Committee on Participation and Chairmanship in 2018. In that role, we worked to ensure that the Kimberley Process maintains high standards of compliance and integrity. We worked inclusively with stakeholders to strengthen the tripartite Government, industry and civil-society structure. We made progress on draft policy and procedures for including or admitting observers and welcomed Gabon as a participant in the Kimberley Process.

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme makes an important contribution to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Peace and development are intrinsically and increasingly linked, and we welcome the ways in which the Kimberley Process continues to contribute to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We encourage other stakeholders whose work is relevant to the diamond industry and that have a commitment to the Kimberley Process values and processes to join or participate in the Scheme.

We thank the European Union for continuing to advance reform, building on the progress achieved during Australia's chairing of the Kimberley Process in 2017. Such reform is critical to positioning the Kimberley Process to make an increasingly important contribution to maintaining international peace and security and ensuring that communities benefit directly from the proceeds of diamond production and trading.

Finally, we congratulate the Russian Federation and Botswana on their appointments as Vice-Chair for 2019 and 2020, respectively, and look forward to their assumption of the roles of Chair and host in 2020, for Russia, and 2021, for Botswana.

Mr. Chumakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would first like to thank the European

Union for its hard work and effective chairmanship of the Kimberley Process in 2018, and to welcome India, which has assumed the post this year. We would like to note that the Russian Federation takes a positive view of draft resolution A/73/L.75 and is one of its sponsors.

The Kimberley Process is a unique international process that ensures the comprehensive monitoring of trade in commodities and specifically in what is itself an exceptional product, rough natural diamonds. This year will be important to the future development and improvement of the Process. We commend the guiding principles of the World Diamond Council System of Warranties, adopted last year. We would like to thank the Republic of Botswana for its constructive attitude to determining the rotation of chairmanship of the Process. Russia and Botswana's joint work will enable us to ensure the future development of the Process and to raise relations between our countries to a new level.

We note the importance of increasing monitoring of the unconditional disclosure of information on the source of diamonds at every stage that ownership changes hands in order to eliminate the possibility of synthetic stones entering the international market as natural diamonds. During our chairmanship of the Kimberley Process, we intend to showcase an integrated information system for monitoring the trade in precious metals and stones, including, among other things, tracking the trade in rough natural diamonds and their subsequent processing and sale. The system experiment will be completed in 2019 and as a result will then become mandatory for all participants in the Russian Federation's market.

The Kimberley Process is a unique forum in which members in any situation can find mutually beneficial solutions based on the principle of consensus, regardless of their international relations on other issues of international cooperation. We firmly believe that the joint productive work of all participants this year will enable us to achieve significant results in developing and improving the Process.

Mr. Chaturvedi (India): I am speaking today in my delegation's capacity as Chair of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for 2019. We would like to congratulate the European Union on its leadership of the Process in 2018 and on its introduction of draft resolution A/73/L.75 for the Assembly's consideration and adoption today. I also want to take this opportunity

to welcome the Russian Federation and Botswana as Vice-Chairs for 2019 and 2020, respectively.

India is one of the founding members of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and looks forward to continuing the excellent initiatives taken last year under the chairmanship of the European Union. We will also strengthen the tripartite structure of the Kimberley Process by engaging regularly with the civil society coalition and industry and encouraging discussion among the three pillars that make up the Kimberley Process — Governments, industry and civil society — with a view to reaching consensus on the various agendas set forth. We will also work to enhance the regional approach, which has been immensely successful with the Mano River Union countries.

One of the key priorities this year will be to work to support the alluvial and artisanal mining countries with capacity-building initiatives. In addition, we would also like to focus on important organizational issues, such as the creation of a permanent secretariat for the Kimberley Process, the reform of the peer-review process, the consolidation of the core document, the creation of multi-donor funding and other important issues.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that we will continue to work together as the Kimberley Process family and take its mandate forward, on the basis of the established guiding principles of inclusiveness, responsibility and dialogue.

Mr. Manyeh (Sierra Leone): I congratulate the President on organizing this meeting on the adoption of draft resolution A/73/L.75, entitled “The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflict”. Let me also thank the European Union, 2018 Chair of the Kimberley Process, for its efforts in that regard. I would like to express our congratulations to India as the incoming Chair of the Kimberley Process, as well as to the Russian Federation as the new Vice-Chair.

The Kimberley Process, which is celebrating its fifteenth year of existence, has since its inception, in 2003, contributed extensively to peace, security and prosperity. For all intents and purposes, the Kimberley process has proved to be an effective mechanism for conflict prevention by reducing the flow of conflict diamonds over the years, thereby inducing diamond-producing countries to follow due process prior to the

shipment of rough diamonds. In addition, the Kimberley Process is also contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as it has put in place a mechanism that has greatly increased diamond revenue, which in turn has given Governments the opportunity to invest in poverty-eradication programmes.

Our delegation is of the view that the Kimberley Process serves as an effective tool to address the problems related to the diamond industry. There is therefore a need to support the draft resolution, in view of its potential to contribute to international peace and security as well as peacebuilding. Following the end of the 11-year civil war in Sierra Leone, the Kimberley Process helped stabilize the illicit trade in diamonds. All diamonds exported from Sierra Leone now go through the certification mechanism that was put in place by the Kimberley Process. The illicit sale of diamonds has thereby been reduced to a minimum.

Our delegation is pleased to inform those present at this meeting that Sierra Leone has now put in place a policy for artisanal mining with a view to eliminating the risks involved in that type of mining. That is the first policy on artisanal mining since diamond mining started in Sierra Leone, in the 1930s, when diamonds were discovered. We hope that the draft resolution, which is to be adopted today, takes into consideration the situation in our mining communities. We believe that if the Kimberley Process were to include development in the mining communities in its mandate, it would be easy to ensure mining companies lived up to their corporate social responsibilities, which would provide basic social amenities for the benefit of mining communities.

Gender inclusion in the diamond industry is another aspect that the Kimberley Process could consider bringing on board during the implementation of the draft resolution, given the fact that there is a significant percentage of women actively participating in the mining industry.

The potential for regional cooperation is high, especially in the Mano River Union region of Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire. To a very large extent, regional cooperation would help enhance the Kimberley Process. With that kind of cooperation in place, all diamond sales within the region would have to go through a thorough certification process, thereby curtailing the illicit sale of diamonds. Our delegation calls on all actors working on the Kimberley Process

to work in close collaboration, coordinate actions and share information with a view to achieving that common goal.

In conclusion, let me assure the General Assembly of Sierra Leone's full support for draft resolution A/73/L.75.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.75, entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. De Miranda (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/73/L.75: Albania, Armenia, Australia, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Estonia, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Namibia, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.75?

Draft resolution A/73/L.75 was adopted (resolution 73/283).

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

The President took the Chair.

Agenda item 14 (continued)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major

United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

Draft resolution (A/73/L.76)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador to introduce draft resolution A/73.L.76.

Ms. Pohl Alfaro (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, on behalf of the Government of El Salvador, allow me to thank the General Assembly for the opportunity to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.76, entitled "United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)". The draft resolution seeks to establish a framework for action to promote and revitalize existing agreements and commitments and ensure coordination and synergy, thereby making a significant contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while respecting the existing mandates of United Nations agencies.

Ecosystem degradation has a considerable effect on biodiversity, land productivity and the economy of our nations, in particular in vulnerable areas in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Ecosystem degradation leads to a loss of critical ecosystem services, which has a negative impact on the well-being of at least 3.2 billion people in the world and increases their vulnerability to the effects of climate change. Reversing that situation is possible with nature-based actions. A holistic approach to ecosystem restoration can generate tangible benefits that will increase food and water security, help preserve biodiversity and contribute to climate-change mitigation and adaptation efforts and disaster risk reduction.

The establishment of the decade will create an enabling environment to raise public awareness about the importance of functional ecosystems that ensure human well-being, economic sustainability and sustainable development. Similarly, it will also promote and facilitate greater engagement by the relevant actors in restoration activities, thereby encouraging and achieving the full participation and involvement of various stakeholders, such as local communities, the private and public sectors, academia, indigenous peoples and society in general.

Promoted through the proposal for a United Nations decade, ecosystem restoration would adopt a multifunctional landscape approach through a

mosaic of interdependent land uses, where ecological, economic, social and development priorities can find convergence, balance and complementarity to become a cost-effective instrument for achieving the goals and objectives set by the various multilateral environmental agreements. It would lead to synergistic approaches to agendas relating to climate change, biodiversity, water resources, land degradation and risk reduction, which in turn would result in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 15, regarding life on land; SDG 2, on zero hunger, food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture; SDG 6, on clean water and sanitation; SDG 12, on responsible consumption and production; SDG 13, on climate action; and SDG 14, on life under water in the oceans and seas.

I would like to especially thank all delegations for supporting the initiative and for contributing constructively in the process to prepare a consensus-based draft resolution. I also thank the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Union for Conservation of Nature for their valuable technical support, commitment and contribution to the development of draft resolution A/73/L.76. I especially thank the 71 countries that have co-sponsored it thus far. I am also grateful for the current efforts to develop monitoring tools and protocols for ecosystem restoration activities. They will help to monitor the benefits derived from the United Nations decade at the national and international level, which will help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

El Salvador invites all States Members of the United Nations to proclaim the United Nations Decade for Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/73/L.76, entitled “United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. De Miranda (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I deliver the following oral statement in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Under the terms of paragraphs 1, 4 and 7 of draft resolution A/73/L.76, the General Assembly would first decide to proclaim 2021-2030 as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, within existing structures and available resources, with the aim of supporting and scaling-up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide and raise awareness of the importance of successful ecosystem restoration; secondly, invite the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to lead the implementation of the decade, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Rio conventions, other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and entities of the United Nations system, including by identifying and developing possible activities and programmes, within their mandates and existing resources, and through voluntary contributions, as appropriate; and, thirdly, request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its eighty-first session on the status of the implementation of the present draft resolution, including its contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is anticipated that the request in paragraph 7 related to the report at the eighty-first session will constitute an addition to the documentation workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of one pre-session report of 8,500 words, to be issued in all six official languages in 2026. That would entail additional requirements for documentation services in 2026, which are currently estimated at \$27,200. With regard to the requests in paragraphs 1 and 4, it is expected that extrabudgetary resources would be required to implement the activities related to the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030). It is, however, not possible at the present time to establish the scope and modalities of those activities, and therefore to estimate the potential cost implications.

The activities related to the requests in paragraphs 1 and 4 would be carried out provided that the related extrabudgetary resources were made available. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/73/L.76, additional requirements currently estimated at \$27,200 under section 2 — General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs and Conference Management — would be included in the proposed programme budget for the year 2026.

Copies of the statement I just read out have been made available on the PaperSmart portal.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/72/L.76, entitled “United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. De Miranda (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/73/L.76: Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cameroon, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/73/L.76?

Draft resolution A/73/L.76 was adopted (resolution 73/284).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Lawrence (United States of America): At the outset, I would like to say that we were surprised and somewhat disappointed to learn of the programme budget implication associated with resolution 72/284. We were not led to believe that would be the case. This once again gives evidence that we do not always adopt these sorts of year, decade and day resolutions fully informed. We take this opportunity to make important points of clarification on some of the language in the resolution.

We underscore that the resolution, and many of the outcome documents referenced therein, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, are non-binding documents that do not create rights or obligations under international law. The United States position regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was articulated in the explanation of position on that document. The United States supports the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a framework for development and will continue to be a global leader in sustainable development through its policies, partnerships, innovations and calls to action. We applaud the call for shared responsibility, including national responsibility, in the 2030 Agenda and emphasize that all countries have a role to play in achieving its vision. However, the 2030 Agenda recognizes that every country must work towards its implementation in accordance with its own national policies and priorities.

The United States also underscored that paragraph 18 of the 2030 Agenda calls for countries to implement the Agenda in a manner that is consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law. We also highlight our mutual recognition in paragraph 58 that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda must respect and be without prejudice to the independent mandates of other processes and institutions, including negotiations, and does not prejudice or serve as precedent for decisions and actions under way in other forums. For example, the Agenda does not represent a commitment to provide new market access for goods or services. The Agenda also does not interpret or alter any World Trade Organization agreement or decision, including the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.

We also make important points of clarification regarding the reaffirmation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Specifically, we note that much of the trade-related language in the Addis Ababa outcome document has been overtaken by events since July 2015. Therefore, it is immaterial, and our reaffirmation of the outcome document has no standing for ongoing work and negotiations that involve trade.

Finally, with regard to the New Urban Agenda, the United States believes that every Member State has the sovereign right to determine how it conducts trade with other countries and that that includes restricting trade in certain circumstances. Economic sanctions, whether

unilateral or multilateral, can be a successful means of achieving foreign policy objectives. In cases where the United States has applied sanctions, they have been used with specific objectives in mind, including as a means to promote a return to the rule of law or democratic systems, to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms or to prevent threats to international security. We are within our rights to utilize our trade and commercial policy as tools to achieve noble objectives.

Targeted economic sanctions can be an appropriate, effective and legitimate alternative to the use of force.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker after the adoption of the resolution. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.