

26 November 2012



General Assembly GA/SHC/4061

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

Sixty-seventh General Assembly
Third Committee
43rd & 44th Meetings (AM & PM)

Third Committee Approves Draft Resolution Aimed at Intensifying Global Effort to Eliminate Female Genital Mutilation

Another Approved Resolution Welcomes Positive Developments in Myanmar; Nine Other Texts Approved, with Indigenous Rights, Obstetric Fistula Among Issues

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) today approved its first ever draft resolution aimed at ending the practice of female genital mutilation, concluding a determined effort by African States and praised as historic by delegations.

Introducing the text entitled “Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation”, the representative of Burkina Faso, on behalf of the African Group, said the text was the culmination of discussions begun some time ago by African States and the General Assembly’s adoption of a resolution on the issue for the first time would intensify world efforts to stop the reactionary practice.

By that text, which was adopted by consensus, the Assembly would urge States to take all measures — including legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation — to both protect women and girls from that “form of violence” and end impunity.

The Assembly would also call for enhanced awareness-raising, so key actors such as Government officials, healthcare providers and religious and community leaders worked to eliminate attitudes and harmful practices that led to female genital mutilation. By other terms, the Assembly would call for observance on 6 February of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation.

Speaking after adoption, Italy’s representative said the draft resolution was an instrument for the global community’s goal to change the fate of women and girls around the world. Today, that goal looked closer than ever, he said.

Kenya's representative said the "historic" adoption of the resolution by the Committee provided an important platform and voice for victims who had undergone that violent practice. The real challenge now was to change attitudes and opinions, he said.

Today the Committee also approved a draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, which was introduced by the representative of Cyprus on behalf of the European Union. The text — adopted for the first time by consensus — welcomed the positive transformation in the country over the past year, as it made important steps toward political reform and national reconciliation.

The text also addressed remaining challenges in the country, calling on the Government to continue its release of prisoners of conscience, take measures to end impunity and address continued violence.

Before the text was approved, delegates from Qatar, Senegal and Turkey each praised developments in Myanmar, but expressed concern about violence in Rakhine State, calling for the Government to protect the rights of the Muslim minority Rohingya community.

Speaking after adoption, Myanmar's delegate said his Government had asked for a vote on the draft resolution for many years, but this year refrained from doing so, as it embarked on the path of democratic transition. He welcomed the text's tone of encouragement and cooperation, yet said the draft retained "sweeping" allegations that had yet to be verified.

He reiterated Myanmar's strong reservation to the text's reference to a Rohingya minority, saying his Government did not accept that characterization. There was no such Rohingya ethnic group, he said. But within the spirit of compromise, Myanmar did not insist on removing paragraphs referring to them.

Myanmar deeply appreciated the "unprecedented" flexibility to amend the last operative paragraph of the text, on continuing to consider the human rights situation in the country. With that amendment, his Government understood that the European Union would end the practice of tabling a draft resolution against Myanmar next year, he said.

Nearly two dozen delegations spoke after adoption of the resolution, including Cambodia's representative, who firmly supported the idea that the text should be the "farewell" resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar.

Japan's representative said he hoped Myanmar's Government would take additional positive measures. "The world will be watching," he said, and Japan would continue to assist the Government in making progress.

Also today the Committee approved nine other texts — seven by consensus and two by recorded vote. The draft resolution on "Glorification of Nazism: Inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", which was presented

by the representative of the Russian Federation, was approved by a vote of 120 in favour to 3 against (Canada, Marshall Islands and United States), with 57 abstentions.

Later, by a recorded vote of 115 in favour to 52 against, with 2 abstentions (Afghanistan and Malawi), the Committee approved the draft resolution on human rights and unilateral coercive measures, introduced by Cuba's representative.

The other draft resolutions the Committee approved by consensus concerned: indigenous rights; enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity; the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders; international cooperation against the world drug problem; and supporting efforts to end obstetric fistula.

The Committee also heard introduction of three draft resolutions. The text on Human rights and extreme poverty was introduced by the representative of Peru, while the text on Protection of migrants was introduced by Mexico's representative, and the text on Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination was introduced by the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

The Committee will reconvene at 10 a.m., Tuesday, 27 November, to take action on a number of outstanding draft resolutions.

Background

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) met today to hear the introduction of three draft resolutions entitled Human rights and extreme poverty (document A/C.3/67/L.32/Rev.1), Protection of migrants (document A/C.3/67/L.40), and Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (document A/C.3/67/L.47).

It also was expected to take action on a number of draft resolutions, entitled: Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar (document A/C.3/67/L.49/Rev.1), Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations (document A/C.3/67/L.21/Rev.1), Rights of indigenous peoples (document A/C.3/67/L.24), Glorification of Nazism: inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (document A/C.3/67/L.55/Rev.1), and Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights (document A/C.3/67/L.37).

In addition, it was expected to take action on resolutions entitled: Human rights and unilateral coercive measures (document A/C.3/67/L.38), International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (document A/C.3/67/L.53), Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity (document A/C.3/67/L.15/Rev.1), United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (document A/C.3/67/L.17/Rev.2), International cooperation

against the world drug problem (document A/C.3/67/L.14/Rev.2) and Supporting efforts to end obstetric fistula (document A/C.3/67/L.22/Rev.1).

Action on Drafts

The Committee first turned its attention to the draft resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar (document A/C.3/67/L.49/Rev.1), introduced by the representative of Cyprus, speaking on behalf of the European Union. She said the past year had seen a transformation in Myanmar, with important steps made toward political reform and national reconciliation, as well as to bring about improvement in the human rights situation. Part of the text was dedicated to welcoming such positive steps as the continued release of prisoners of conscience.

Further, she said it welcomed the signing of initial peace agreements with 10 of 11 armed groups. Steps towards engagement with the United Nations were also reflected. The text addressed the remaining challenges, calling on the Government to continue its release of prisoners of conscience, take measures to end impunity and address continued violence. The text had been negotiated against the backdrop of the changes made in Myanmar, and the European Union appreciated Myanmar's cooperation in the process. She hoped the text would be adopted by consensus.

Before action, Qatar's delegate welcomed the political reforms taking place in Myanmar and looked forward to those reforms continuing. But, he expressed concern about one state where peoples' rights were being violated. Such persecution was unacceptable. He called on Myanmar to achieve national reconciliation and to protect its minorities.

As for the violence in Rakhine, he condemned acts that had led to murder and displacement of citizens, calling on the Government to find the perpetrators of such illegal acts. Attention should be given to minorities in Rohingya, he said, urging that they be given birth certificates and work permits. As for the draft resolution, he said it contained a number of positive aspects, including vis-à-vis the Rohingya community, most of whom were Muslims. He would have liked to have seen the proposals by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) included in the text, which would have expressed the situation in Myanmar in a more realistic manner. Qatar would join consensus out of its interest in maintaining the achieved consensus.

Senegal's delegate said Myanmar must redouble its efforts to emerge from geographic, ethnic and religious constraints. Acts of torture and arbitrary detention were unacceptable human rights violations and required international cooperation to end the real risks to interethnic or religious violence. The efforts made by the Special Rapporteur were of particular importance. The issue of the Rohingya community must be resolved and he called on Myanmar to do more to protect that community, as those people were the subject of discrimination. Senegal supported the resolution and expected to see evidence of Myanmar's commitment to upholding the rights of its communities.

Turkey's delegate welcomed the positive developments in Myanmar, citing the release of political prisoners in that regard. But, violence had led to the loss of life and property and he urged an immediate end to it. He encouraged Myanmar to provide

unhindered humanitarian access to Rakhinestate, welcoming the memorandum of understanding recently signed between Myanmar and the OIC. Turkey hoped today's resolution would be adopted by consensus.

The Committee then approved the resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar (document A/C.3/67/L.49/Rev.1) by consensus.

By the text, the Assembly would welcome the positive developments in Myanmar and Government commitment to continue the path of political reform, democratization and national reconciliation and the promotion and protection of human rights. It would further welcome Myanmar's efforts to ensure that parliamentary by-elections held on 1 April 2012 were well organized and transparent, encouraged by the subsequent participation of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy, along with other political parties, in Parliament.

By other terms, the Assembly would welcome the increasing space for political activity, assembly, speech and the press, including the 20 August 2012 abolition of direct press media censorship, as well as the continued release of prisoners of conscience over the past year. At the same time, it would urge the Government to continue such releases without delay or conditions, and to ensure the full restoration of their rights and freedoms. It would express concern about the remaining human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, forced displacement, land confiscations, rape, among other abuses, urging Myanmar to put an end to such violations.

By further terms, it would call on Myanmar to ensure accountability and end impunity, including carrying out a transparent and independent investigation into all reports of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. It would express deep concern about the armed conflict in Kachin State, calling on the Government and all parties to the conflict to protect civilians, and for safe, unhindered humanitarian access. Elsewhere, it would urge Myanmar to accelerate its efforts to address discrimination, human rights violations and violence affecting ethnic minorities, expressing particular concern about the Rohingya minority in Rakhine state. It also would express serious concern at the latest outbreaks of violence between communities in that state. The Secretary-General would be requested to give all assistance necessary to enable the Special Adviser and the Special Rapporteur to discharge their mandates and to report to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

Speaking after action, Myanmar's delegate said his Government had asked for a vote on the draft resolution for many years; however, this year it had refrained from doing so, as it had embarked on the path of democratic transition. The pace and scope of change had surprised the world and won international support. At such a time, criticism should not prevail anymore in today's forum. Myanmar had chosen the path of cooperation. The text provided generous space to welcome positive developments in Myanmar, and rightly shifted the focus to a tone of encouragement and cooperation. He welcomed those constructive changes.

However, not everything was agreeable, he said, as there was misleading wording in operative paragraphs 7, 14 and 15. The draft still retained "sweeping" allegations that had yet to be verified. The recommendation made in operative paragraph 7 could be implemented as deemed necessary, in line with existing law. His

Government was not receptive to any course of action that would disrupt the national reconciliation process.

A remaining challenge was the violence in Rakhine State, he said, which he regretted had led to the loss of life and property. The main reason behind it was a cycle of violence between both communities. The issue could not be resolved overnight; it could only be solved through long- and short-term measures within a multifaceted approach. Myanmar had gone along with the resolution — including operative paragraphs 14 and 15 — which called for ensuring safety to populations and granting unhindered humanitarian access. Those measures were what the Government had been doing with firm resolve.

He reiterated Myanmar's strong reservation to the text's reference to a Rohingya minority, saying his Government did not accept that characterization. There was no such Rohingya ethnic group. Despite that, the right to citizenship had never been and would never be denied, if it was in line with the law of the land. With that spirit of compromise, Myanmar did not insist on removing those two paragraphs.

Violence in Rakhine was not issue of religious persecution, he said. The violence had taken place in small pockets of the western part of Myanmar. In sum, he deeply appreciated the “unprecedented” flexibility to amend the last operative paragraph of the text, saying that with that amendment, his Government understood that the European Union would end the practice of tabling a draft resolution against Myanmar next year. While appreciating the Secretary-General's efforts, he said resources should be redirected towards the economic and social development of the people of Myanmar. Even if needed, the mandate must end its link with the present resolution.

Also speaking after action, the United States' delegate commended “Burma”, saying the country had made notable progress towards building a sustainable democracy. The President had announced resolution of the issue of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) access to prisoners and the creation of a transparent process to review all such prisoner cases by the end of the year. The United States was ready to offer support for the implementation of such measures. With respect to the Special Adviser, she said the United States understood his continued work would be achieved within existing resources.

Iran's delegate said her Government had joined consensus on the text, but that must not be understood as contrary to its position on country-specific resolutions. As regards the Muslim minority in Myanmar, Iran was concerned about the Government's crackdown in Rohingya province. Also of concern were remarks by some Myanmar authorities about stripping Muslims of their citizenship rights. Ethnic and religious cleansing of Muslims was inexcusable under international law and the United Nations must take urgent measures to protect the rights of Muslims in Myanmar by calling on the Government to end its crackdown. On country-specific mandates, she said the proliferation of such texts breached the principles of non-selectivity in addressing human rights issues.

Cambodia's delegate welcomed the text's adoption by consensus, calling it a turning point in international cooperation. The text was more forward looking than in previous years. He recognized the continued positive developments in Myanmar,

encouraging further steps towards democratization and national reconciliation. Such positive developments had won the support of the regional and international community. A country that had made significant change deserved support. He firmly supported the idea that the text should be the “farewell” resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar.

Canada’s delegate welcomed the “Burmese” Government’s positive steps, such as entering into new ceasefires and peace agreements with groups, and releasing hundreds of political prisoners. Canada had suspended its general trade and investment sanctions. She was concerned at the status of the remaining political prisoners and continued violence in the country. She urged authorities to address such issues. Canada stood ready to support the ongoing reform process. The resolution showed the type of multilateral cooperation the Committee strived to achieve.

Egypt’s delegate welcomed positive developments in Myanmar, notably the 16 November letter from President U Thein Sein to the Secretary-General, reiterating his condemnation of the violence by extremists in Rakhine and against the Rohingya minority. In the letter, the President promised he would address all political aspects of the issue, including the return of displaced persons and giving them nationality. Egypt welcomed the text’s approval by consensus, voicing hope that the Committee would no longer need to address the issue in coming years. He hoped displaced persons would return home and attain nationality. He was concerned at the non-recognition of one particular minority in Myanmar, expressing hope for national reconciliation.

Singapore’s delegate said that, as a matter of principle, his Government did not agree with country specific resolutions, as they were driven by political, rather than human rights considerations. Human rights should be taken up in the universal periodic review in the Human Rights Council. Singapore would abstain on all such resolutions and that should not be seen as condoning the mistreatment of citizens. At the same time, he welcomed the positive developments in Myanmar and was encouraged by its reform efforts. As such, Singapore had joined consensus on the resolution.

India’s delegate said Myanmar was an important neighbour, and, in April, India had observed the smooth conduct of by-elections in that country. He commended efforts towards political, economic and social reform, including peace agreements with several groups and dialogue with the National League for Democracy, among other political groups. As for Rakhine, he noted Myanmar had taken steps to restore law and order and to meet the relief and rehabilitation needs of all affected communities. The international community must extend all possible support to Myanmar in the spirit of cooperation. Making today’s text the last would convey international support for the progress underway in Myanmar, and India would play a constructive role in that process.

Japan’s delegate said his Government had joined consensus on today’s resolution, recognizing the progress made in democratization and national reconciliation. At the same time, it was important to encourage Myanmar to take more steps forward. The international approach should be one of dialogue and cooperation. He hoped the Government would take more positive measures. “The world will be watching”, he said, and Japan would continue to assist the Government in making progress.

Indonesia's delegate joined consensus on the resolution, commending the relevant parties for formulating a text that included numerous positive developments in Myanmar. Indeed, Myanmar was in a transition to an open, transparent and democratic country. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) would help in the search for long-term solutions.

Cameroon's delegate said her country had always abstained from such resolutions, as it believed that dialogue and cooperation must prevail in addressing human rights issues. Sometimes resolutions did not address the welfare of people. Thus, she welcomed cooperation among the European Union, international community and Myanmar, encouraging those partners to continue such work. She also encouraged Myanmar to continue its reforms.

The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic said his Government joined consensus on today's text, welcoming the unprecedented developments in Myanmar. The remaining challenges would be resolved through efforts by the Government, with international support. The international community should view Myanmar from a new perspective. The lifting of the remaining sanctions would allow Myanmar to integrate into the world and strengthen regional economic cooperation. He fully supported Myanmar's democratization process.

Australia's delegate welcomed today's historic adoption, saying that for the last 18 months, the President had led a Government that had released over 700 political prisoners and introduced new laws allowing for greater freedom of assembly, among other freedoms. She said such reforms allowed the people in Myanmar to lead peaceful, prosperous lives.

Myanmar's reforms deserved full international support, she said, and Australia had shown its long-term constructive engagement with the lifting of travel and other sanctions, and support for peacebuilding in Rakhine state. Myanmar understood that much work still must be done and she encouraged the Government to expand political freedoms, build national reconciliation and uphold all peoples' rights. She hoped today's would be the last such text considered by the Third Committee.

China's delegate said his country had always been for constructive dialogue on human rights issues and against country-specific resolutions. China was not against the consensus on today's text. It was for Myanmar's peoples to decide on the direction the country would take. Myanmar had made "remarkable" progress in promoting national reconciliation and improving external relations.

Noting that the Rakhine state issue was an internal affair, she supported Myanmar in its national reconciliation efforts, saying the international community should not resort to criticism. Rather, it should respect the United Nations Charter and the sovereign rights of Myanmar. China resolutely opposed country-specific resolutions that would allow some countries to interfere in internal affairs. She hoped today's text would be the last in the Third Committee.

Venezuela's delegate rejected texts that condemned developing countries under the pretext of upholding human rights. That was a part of a strategic game of the neo-

colonial dominion. The Human Rights Council was the organ through which human rights should be addressed through impartial dialogue. The Council's universal periodic review was valuable, as it ensured a non-selective examination of human rights in any part of the world.

Thailand's delegate reiterated her country's support for democratic reforms in Myanmar, saying that the pace had been "beyond anyone's expectations". There was no question of the Government's commitment to advance along that path. The international community must send an unequivocal message of support to Myanmar and its people and refrain from applying political pressure. She recognized efforts made by the European Union to adopt more balanced and forward-looking approaches to the situation in Myanmar. Today's text had been adopted without a vote for the first time in its history and there would no longer be a need for a text on the topic next year.

The representative of the United Arab Emirates, on behalf of the OIC, said his delegation had joined consensus on the draft resolution, whereas in previous country-specific resolutions, most OIC member States had abstained. The change was due to the fact that the new democracy needed strong international support. The organized attacks against the Rohingya Muslim minority had caused great loss of life and property. The OIC called on the Government to not allow a recurrence of violence, to take legal action against the perpetrators, end discrimination based on ethnicity and religion, and develop a policy of long-term reconciliation in Rakhine State.

He went on to express deep disappointment with the reservation by Myanmar's representative on operative paragraphs 7, 14 and 15. "This position is extremely worrying", he said. Without addressing the root causes of conflict, especially resentment towards the Rohingya community, the democratization process would never be credible. However, he welcomed the letter recently sent to the Secretary-General, in which the President promised to deal with the perpetrators in line with the rule of law.

He said his delegation had joined consensus on today's text, in the hope that such assurances would be respected by the Government. Indeed, the world would be watching developments in Rakhine State. The OIC was concerned at the worsening humanitarian situation in that state and would continue to extend assistance, irrespective of peoples' religion or ethnicity. He hoped the memorandum of understanding, which called for the opening an office to coordinate such humanitarian assistance, would be implemented without politicization.

Cuba's delegate said his Government was against country-specific resolutions. The text did not seek to enhance international cooperation. Rather, it used today's topic as a political pretext and he opposed the political motivations underpinning it. The universal periodic review was the context in which today's topic should be discussed. He opposed the ongoing consideration of it in the Committee.

Israel's delegate welcomed the positive developments in Myanmar, noting the release of hundreds of political prisoners and successful holding of by-elections. She thanked all delegations for their cooperation in reaching consensus.

The representative of the Republic of Korea said this resolution adopted today reflected both progress as well as remaining concerns in a balanced manner. His

delegation hoped that this would be the last time this matter was discussed in the General Assembly.

Viet Nam's representative said her delegation had joined consensus, but it was her country's position that constructive dialogue was the only way forward on human rights.

Nicaragua's representative said her country rejected country-specific resolutions on human rights. Dialogue without external pressure, and avoiding politicization was the way forward. The universal periodic review was the ideal mechanism to ensure greater consistency for constructive dialogue.

Bolivia's representative said this type of resolution should not be taken up by the Committee. When it came to international rule of law, the Human Rights Council avoided selectivity. Such resolutions within the Committee implied selectivity and provided grounds for politicization. Therefore, Bolivia had abstained, he said.

Ecuador's representative said his country joined consensus because the country concerned had not requested a vote. However, it opposed such country-specific measures. Cooperation and dialogue were the most effective means for improving human rights worldwide, he said.

The Committee turned to the draft resolution on Human rights and extreme poverty (document A/C.3/67/L.32/Rev.1), which was introduced by the representative of Peru. He said his country introduced the resolution every two years. Currently millions lived in poverty and extreme poverty, deprived of their basic human rights, and their situation had worsened under the current economic crisis. The main change to the resolution was that it took note with satisfaction of the guiding principles adopted by the Human Rights Council in September, which provided useful tools for human rights standards.

Next, the Committee heard introduction of the draft resolution on draft resolution on Protection of migrants (document A/C.3/67/L.40) by the representative of Mexico. The resolution compiled others by previous Committees and Assemblies and guaranteed that all authorities protected the human rights of migrants. The draft resolution also sought to underscore the issue of development in migration, she said.

The Committee then heard introduction of the draft resolution entitled Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (document A/C.3/67/L.47), introduced by the representative of the United Arab Emirates. The draft was based on last year's landmark General Assembly resolution, and had some amendments on developments of concern by OIC members, including the unacceptable violence and loss of life triggered by the horrible video denigrating the Prophet that was broadcast online. Such behaviour had implications to peace and security locally and internationally.

Next, the representative of Burkina Faso, on behalf of the African Group, introduced the draft resolution on Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations (document A/C.3/67/L.21/Rev.1), saying it represented the

culmination of discussions begun some time ago by African States, aiming to eliminate female genital mutilation on a global level. The consideration of the issue for the first time by the Assembly would intensify efforts to see that reactionary practice eliminated. He expressed appreciation to all draft co-sponsors.

The Committee then adopted the draft resolution by consensus.

By the text, the Assembly — recognizing that female genital mutilations were an irreparable, irreversible abuse of the human rights of woman and girls, as well as a threat to their health, and deeply concerned that, despite the increased focus by the international community, the practice continues to exist in all parts of the world — would stress that the empowerment of women and girls was key to breaking the cycle of violence and for promoting and protecting their human rights, including to sexual and reproductive health. The Assembly would call on States to fulfil their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, among other instruments. Awareness-raising should be enhanced to ensure that all key actors — Government officials, healthcare providers and religious and community leaders, among others — worked to eliminate attitudes and harmful practices, especially female genital mutilation.

By other terms, the Assembly would urge States to condemn all harmful practices affecting women and girls, whether committed within or outside a medical institution, and take all measures — including legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation — to both protect women and girls from this form of violence and end impunity. It would also urge that punitive measures be complemented by awareness-raising and educational processes that would promote a consensus towards the elimination of the practice, including revising school curricula, among others.

The Assembly, by further terms, would call on States to ensure implementation of national legislative frameworks on eliminating violence against women and girls, in particular female genital mutilation, and to monitor adherence to them. More broadly, the Assembly would call for international support for a second phase of the Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, due to end in December 2013, and observance on 6 February of the International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation. The Secretary-General would be requested to submit to the Assembly's sixty-ninth session a multidisciplinary report on the root causes and factors contributing to the practice of female genital mutilation.

Speaking after adoption, the observer of the Holy See expressed appreciation to those who facilitated the adoption of the resolution and took into account comments from his delegation. The Holy See supported the resolution, but had established reservations on references to sexual and reproductive health and gender; it believed sexual and reproductive health should not be interpreted as abortion, and gender should refer to male and female.

The representative of Cyprus, speaking on behalf of the European Union, strongly welcomed adoption of the resolution, which was a historic step in global efforts against female genital mutilation and an important day for women and girls. Elimination of female genital mutilation could be achieved through a united global effort, with legislation accompanied by action at community levels. Progress had been

made, and it was now time to step up efforts to eliminate it within a generation. The resolution was an important tool to give momentum to global initiatives, and the European Union looked forward to further partnership on this matter.

Italy's representative said his country had always been a strong advocate of the initiative. The draft resolution was not a point of arrival, but rather an instrument to achieve a common goal. Political engagement and development cooperation must always go hand in hand, he said. Together, the global community could change the fate of women and girls around the world, and today that goal looked closer than ever.

Kenya's representative said the historic adoption of this resolution by the Committee provided an important platform and voice for victims who had undergone that violent practice. The resolution recognized that female genital mutilation had a human rights dimension, but there were also social and cultural practices that made it a difficult issue to tackle. The real challenge was to change attitudes and opinions; the international community should support those efforts to protect girls at risk of female genital mutilation.

Next, the Committee took up the draft resolution on the Rights of indigenous peoples (document A/C.3/67/L.24/Rev.1), which was introduced by the representative of Bolivia. He said it was the outcome of broad, constructive, informal discussions. The draft continued to encourage continued contributions to the two funds for indigenous peoples, he said.

The Committee then adopted the draft resolution by consensus.

By that text, the General Assembly would reaffirm its past resolutions on the organization of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, to be held on 22 and 23 September 2014. It would stress the importance of promoting and pursuing the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples also through international cooperation to support national and regional efforts to achieve the ends of the Declaration, including the right to maintain and strengthen the distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions of indigenous peoples and the right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.

The Assembly would, by further provisions, note its concern about the extreme disadvantages that indigenous peoples have typically faced across a range of social and economic indicators and about the impediments to their full enjoyment of their rights. It would request the Human Rights Council to establish, as a matter of priority and within the existing resources, an appropriate way forward for considering the ways and means of promoting participation at the United Nations of representatives of indigenous peoples on issues affecting them.

It would also request the Secretary-General, in collaboration with Member States and relevant funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, to prepare a comprehensive final report on the achievement of the goals and objectives of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, and its impact on the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations development

agenda beyond 2015, to be submitted no later than May 2014, which shall serve as an input to the preparatory process for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. Finally, it would decide to continue consideration of the question at its sixty-eighth session, under the item entitled “Rights of indigenous peoples”.

Speaking after adoption, the representative of the United Kingdom said his Government was fully committed to protecting human rights for all, including indigenous peoples. Since equality and universality were principles of human rights, his country did not accept the concept of collective human rights under international law. The rights of the group should not supersede the rights of the individual, he said.

The representative of the United States said her delegation was pleased to join consensus. Indigenous peoples continued to face numerous challenges, and the United States remained committed to addressing those, both at home and abroad. With respect to references to climate change, the United States agreed it was a global problem but disagreed that the solution was to assign blame to a particular group of countries.

Canada’s representative said his country had taken significant steps in further building and strengthening its relations with aboriginals. The draft was non-binding and did not change any Canadian laws.

Turning next to the elimination of racism and related intolerance, the Committee took up the draft resolution on Glorification of Nazism: Inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (document A/C.3/67/L.55/Rev.1), which was introduced by the representative of Russian Federation.

He said the text was truly inter-regional and enjoyed broad support. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, among other instruments, were a direct response to the horrors of the Second World War. Monuments to the Waffen-SS, among others, honoured those responsible for spilling the blood of women, men and children. The co-sponsors agreed that it was inadmissible for people to glorify the Waffen-SS and other such groups. He introduced an amendment to paragraph 16, which would stress the importance of history classes.

A recorded vote had been requested.

The representative of the Russian Federation asked which country had requested the vote.

The Chair responded that the United States delegation had requested it.

Making a general statement, the representative of Belarus said Nazism was the totalitarian ideology of fascist Germany and its allies, which was connected to terrorist methods of power. That required dividing nations into those of value and those not of value. Crimes such as genocide had been condemned by the Nuremberg Tribunal. The harsh treatment by Nazis had led to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which condemned acts based on hatred, xenophobia or racial discrimination.

She said the world had paid a high price for the victory over Nazism, including her country, one quarter of whose population had died in the war. Some 629 villages had been burned by SS troops. Today, Belarus still saw the signs of Nazism and she was concerned by extremist parties and movements that openly cultivated xenophobic ideas of Nazism and racial superiority. Many States that had forgotten the lessons of the Second World War, under the guise of free speech, looked aside when they saw the glorification of Nazism. She called on States, and the United Nations — including the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance — to work on the issue. Belarus supported the text and called on others to do the same.

Speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, the United States' representative said she supported many elements of the text and joined in expressing revulsion at attempts to glorify Nazi ideology. The United States had been a strong supporter of United Nations efforts to condemn the Holocaust and shared the concern on the frequency of racist views expressed in any forum.

At the same time, she was concerned that the text failed to distinguish between offensive expression and actions. The United States did not see curtailing the freedom of expression as effective in combating racism or related intolerance. Individual freedoms of expression should be protected, even when the ideas expressed were hateful. Hateful ideas would fail due to their lack of merit. The best antidote was not criminalizing offensive speech, but rather reaching out to minority groups and the vigorous defence of freedoms of religion and expression.

By a recorded vote of 120 in favour, to 3 against (Canada, Marshall Islands and United States) and 57 abstentions, the Committee approved the draft resolution on Glorification of Nazism: Inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (document A/C.3/67/L.55/Rev.1) as orally revised.

By that text, the Assembly would be alarmed at the spread in many parts of the world of various extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, as well as similar extremist ideological movements. It would also express deep concern about the glorification of the Nazi movement and former members of the Waffen-SS organization, including by erecting monuments and memorials and holding public demonstrations in the name of the glorification of the Nazi past, the Nazi movement and neo-Nazism, as well as by declaring or attempting to declare such members and those who fought against the anti-Hitler coalition and collaborated with the Nazi movement participants in national liberation movements.

Further, it would emphasize the need to take the measures necessary to put an end to the practices described above, and calls upon States to take more effective measures in accordance with international human rights law to combat those phenomena and the extremist movements, which pose a real threat to democratic values. It would call upon States to continue to invest in education, inter alia, in order to transform attitudes and correct ideas of racial hierarchies and superiority promoted by extremist political parties, movements and groups and counter their negative influence.

After the vote, the representative of Timor Leste said her vote had not been registered. Her country would have voted in favour of the text.

Togo's delegate said her Government had the same problem and would have voted in favour of the text.

Switzerland's delegate said negotiations on the text had taken place in a constructive environment. The historic balance in the text could be improved, as the text only targeted contemporary forms of racism. Contemporary racism was not restricted to a historic period or specific context. It could be found worldwide at all times. The text should become part of the omnibus resolution on racism. Switzerland had abstained in the vote.

Norway's delegate fully supported the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, agreeing that Nazism and neo-Nazism were abhorrent. The fight against racism must be a common and consensual priority. It required a comprehensive approach. It was important to confront prejudice through dialogue, not through restricting human rights, such as the freedom of assembly and association. He welcomed the amendments to the text, but was still concerned about its narrow scope. The biased focus on issues not relevant to the human rights agenda did not help the struggle against racism and related intolerance. The draft should adopt a more legally appropriate approach with a clear focus on the human rights perspective. He had abstained in the vote.

The representative of Cyprus, on behalf of the European Union, reiterated his delegation's steadfast commitment to the fight against racism, xenophobia, discrimination and related intolerance. No country was immune to challenges posed by ideological movements or groups that incited such behaviour. It was the responsibility of each State to adopt a comprehensive approach and ensure that instigators were brought to justice. He acknowledged Russian Federation's efforts to organize consultations in a constructive manner. There had been an extensive exchange of views through an open negotiations process. That had led to a significant number of the European Union's concerns having been met.

In that context, he noted the reformulation of operative paragraph 20 and progress made in preambular paragraph 3. He recognized other improvements, like the insertion of a new operative paragraph 30 and a more balanced reference to role of the Internet in combating racism, xenophobia, discrimination and related intolerance. The unexpected change in the title, however, had narrowed the scope in addressing all contemporary forms of such behaviour. He reiterated concern for language that addressed too restrictively the freedoms of assembly and association, among other things. He did not support the request for the Special Rapporteur to report back on various elements in the text. For such reasons, the European Union had abstained on the draft resolution as orally revised.

Portugal's delegate said her Government had participated in negotiations with a true willingness to achieve a text that could be supported by all delegations. She appreciated amendments to take account of various concerns. At the same time, concerns about safeguarding the freedom of expression had prevented Portugal from voting in favour of the text. Portugal had abstained in the vote, believing that there had been very positive momentum in the negotiations this year.

Argentina's delegate said she had voted in favour of the text, given the great importance her country gave to any measure to combat such behaviour. Operative paragraph 23 should not be understood as imposing a restriction on the right to freedom of expression.

Next, the Committee took up the draft resolution on Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights (document A/C.3/67/L.37), which was introduced by the representative of Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. She made a brief oral amendment to operative paragraph 12, which would recall the Human Rights Council's initiative to organize a seminar on the enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights. She hoped the text would be adopted by consensus.

The Committee then approved that draft resolution by consensus as orally revised.

By that text, the General Assembly would underline the fact that mutual understanding, dialogue, cooperation, transparency and confidence-building were important elements in all activities for the promotion and protection of human rights. It would call on States, specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations to continue to carry out a constructive dialogue and consultations for the enhancement of understanding and promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, encouraging non-governmental organizations to contribute actively to that work.

The Secretary-General, along with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, would be requested to consult States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations on ways and means, as well as obstacles and proposals to overcome them, for the enhancement of international cooperation and dialogue in the United Nations human rights machinery, including the Human Rights Council.

After action, the United States' representative said her Government was pleased to join consensus on the text. However, she noted that the text, like others in the Second Committee (Economic and Financial), contained language referring to a global food crisis that the United States considered inaccurate. She did not believe the current situation constituted a global food crisis.

The Committee then took up the draft resolution on Human rights and unilateral coercive measures (document A/C.3/67/L.38), which was also introduced by the representative of Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. She said the Non-Aligned Movement had stated many times its opposition to all unilateral coercive measures, especially against developing countries. At no time could people be deprived of their means to development. The text reiterated the need to refrain from such measures, which prevented the full enjoyment of the economic and social development of peoples.

A recorded vote had been requested.

Cuba's delegate asked which delegation had requested the vote.

The Chair responded that the United States delegation had requested the vote.

Speaking before the vote, the United States delegate said her Government had requested a vote because it had no basis in international law. It was a State responsibility to promote and protect the rights of its citizens. The United States viewed unilateral and multilateral measures as legitimate means to achieve foreign policy, security and other objectives. The United States was not alone in that practice.

By a recorded vote of 115 in favour to 52 against, with 2 abstentions (Afghanistan and Malawi), the Committee approved the draft resolution on Human rights and unilateral coercive measures (document A/C.3/67/L.38).

By that text, the Assembly would stress that unilateral coercive measures and legislation were contrary to international law, international humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and principles governing peaceful relations among States. It would express grave concern that, in some countries, the situation of children was adversely affected by unilateral coercive measures that created obstacles to trade relations, impeded the full realization of social and economic development and hindered the well-being of the affected population, with particular consequences for women and children.

By other terms, the Assembly would strongly urge States to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter that impeded the full achievement of economic and social development. It would also condemn continuing unilateral application and enforcement by certain Powers of unilateral coercive measures, and underline that unilateral coercive measures were one of the major obstacles to the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development.

Next, the Committee took up the draft resolution on the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances (document A/C.3/67/L.53), which was introduced by the representative of Argentina, also on behalf of France and Morocco. She said the draft resolution urged States that had not yet done so to explore the possibility of signing and ratifying the Convention. In addition, it recognized that implementation of the Convention would contribute to the development of international law on human rights and end impunity. The text would recognize the systematic practice of enforced disappearance could constitute a crime against humanity.

The Committee then approved the draft resolution on International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances by consensus.

By that text, the Assembly would recall that no exceptional circumstance may be invoked to justify enforced disappearance, and that no one shall be held in secret detention. It would be deeply concerned by the increase in enforced or involuntary disappearances in various regions of the world, including arrest, detention and abduction, when these are part of or amount to enforced disappearances, and by the growing number of reports concerning harassment, ill-treatment and intimidation of witnesses of disappearances or relatives of persons who have disappeared.

It would also recall that the Convention set out the right of victims to know the truth regarding the circumstances of enforced disappearance, progress and results of the investigation and the fate of the disappeared person, setting forth State obligations to take measures in this regard. Also, it would acknowledge the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross in promoting compliance with international humanitarian law in that field. Further, the Assembly would welcome that 91 States had signed the Convention and 36 had ratified or acceded to it, and would call upon States that had not yet done so to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to the Convention, as well as consider the option provided for in articles 31 and 32 regarding the Committee on Enforced Disappearances.

The Committee then turned to the draft resolution on Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity (document A/C.3/67/L.15/Rev.1), which was introduced by the representative of Italy. He said that, in its different forms, crime directly impacted all States without discrimination. “Crime and violence are a development issue,” he said, calling for a holistic approach in response.

He said the lack of international cooperation vis-à-vis illegal assets would result in criminal contamination of vulnerable economic systems. The text aimed to build consensus on the fight against transnational organized crime, promote the universality of all pertinent United Nations instruments - especially the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols - and confirm support for the technical assistance provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. He counted on the widest support of States.

The Committee then approved by consensus the draft resolution on Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity.

By that text, the Assembly would express its grave concern at the negative effects of transnational organized crime, including smuggling of and trafficking in human beings, narcotic drugs and small arms and light weapons, on development, peace and security and human rights. It would also express deep concern about connections between some forms of transnational organized crime and terrorism, emphasizing the need to enhance cooperation at the national, subregional, regional and international levels in order to strengthen responses.

By other terms, it would request the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in consultation with States and within existing resources, to continue to support the enhancement of capacity and skills in the field of forensic sciences, including the setting of standards and development of technical assistance material for training for law enforcement and prosecution authorities, and to promote the establishment of regional networks of forensic science providers in order to enhance their expertise to prevent and combat transnational organized crime.

The Assembly would reiterate the importance of providing the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme with sufficient, stable and predictable funding for the full implementation of its mandates, in conformity with the high priority

accorded to it and in accordance with the increasing demand for its services, in particular with regard to the provision of increased assistance to developing countries, countries with economies in transition and countries emerging from conflict, in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice reform.

After action, Venezuela's delegate stressed the need for developing countries to continue making efforts to eradicate internal inequality and poverty. Those efforts should be supported by the international community. Venezuela had joined consensus on the text, but had reservations on preambular paragraphs 16, 18, and 19. She recognized the impact of transnational organized crime on human rights, the rule of law and development, but did not agree that those crimes impacted on international peace and security. That assertion contradicted several resolutions.

On preambular paragraph 18, which established a link between transnational organized crime and terrorism, she said Venezuela did not recognize a systematic connection between crimes, as that overlooked the norms of due process and presumption of innocence. Connections between terrorism and transnational organized crime were not permanent and stemmed from different motives.

As for preambular paragraph 19, she said the responsibility outlined therein was not contained in any of the terrorism conventions or regional instruments. There was no internationally agreed definition of terrorism. The paragraph distorted the Bangkok Declaration. The question of terrorism should be dealt with in the Sixth Committee (Legal).

Canada's delegate said his Government was committed to keeping its communities safe. It was important to recognize the legitimate ownership of and trade in firearms, including for recreational use. As there were legitimate uses, there was a legitimate trade.

The Committee then turned to the draft resolution on the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (document A/C.3/67/L.17/Rev.2), which was introduced by the representative of Uganda.

The representative of the Secretariat said the draft resolution would not entail any programme budget implications for the 2012-2013 biennium.

Uganda's delegate said her region was seeing new and dynamic crime trends that sabotaged African economies, especially through the use of digital technology. Piracy was another vice that Africa could ill-afford. The text asserted that the investment of resources in crime prevention was a major step in the right direction. The Institute had raised awareness of cyber criminals, and carried out capacity- building in the areas of juvenile justice, childcare and protection. The text reflected the decision not to request financial resources for the Institute, as it was undergoing a structural review. Instead, it focused on the Institute's activities. She hoped it would be adopted by consensus.

The Committee then approved the draft resolution on United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders without a vote.

By that text, the Assembly would emphasize that controlling crime is a collective responsibility and not an isolated function of legislative processes alone and that investment in crime prevention and an increase in resources for the provision of services contributes to development. It would also note with concern that the financial situation of the Institute has greatly affected its capacity to deliver services to African Member States in an effective and comprehensive manner, urging States Members of the Institute to continue to make every possible effort to meet their obligations to the Institute.

By other terms, it would urge all States and non-governmental organizations to continue adopting measures to support the Institute. It would request the Secretary-General to intensify efforts to mobilize all relevant entities of the United Nations to provide the necessary financial and technical support to the Institute to enable it to fulfil its mandate, bearing in mind that the precarious financial situation of the Institute greatly undermined its capacity to deliver services effectively. He also would be requested to mobilize financial resources to maintain the Institute with the core Professional staff required.

The Committee then turned to the draft resolution on International Drug Control (document A/C.3/67/L.14/Rev.2). The Secretary read a statement saying that the proposed text contained no budget implications for the 2012-2013 session.

The text was then introduced by the representative of Mexico, who said that it was the result of intense negotiations aimed at dealing in a resolute and effective way with the world drug problem. She expressed appreciation to all delegations for their cooperation in negotiations and hoped the draft resolution would be passed by consensus as an expression of joint efforts against the global narcotics problem.

The Committee then adopted the draft resolution by consensus.

By that text, the Assembly would express its grave concern that, despite continuing increased efforts by States, relevant organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, the world drug problem continues to constitute a serious threat to public health and safety and the well-being of humanity, in particular children and young people and their families, and that the violence spread by international organized crime in the undertaking of criminal activities represents a serious problem, which compromises development, security and democratic institutions in all nations.

It would call upon Member States to engage in effective cooperation and practical action aimed at addressing the world drug problem on the basis of the principle of common and shared responsibility. The Assembly would also emphasize the important role played by civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations, in addressing the world drug problem, and would decide to convene in 2016 a special session of the General Assembly to assess the achievements and limitations of the current policy established to counter the world drug problem, including the violence that the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs generate throughout the world, as well as the adoption of the necessary decisions to be taken for enhancing the efficiency of the strategies and instruments with which the international community faces the challenge presented.

Speaking in explanation of position, Venezuela's representative said her country joined consensus because it was concerned by the matter, but it wished to draw attention to certain elements in the draft resolution; references to illicit drugs should be on the use of the drugs, not the drugs themselves. Her delegation had no intention to re-open discussion about that and other points, but trusted the matter would be taken into account before the special session in 2016. Venezuela also did not recognize automatic links between crimes, and hoped at the next session those concerns would be taken into account.

Sudan's representative then took the floor to say his delegation had been absent during a previous vote, but would have voted in favour of the draft resolution on human rights and unilateral coercive measures.

The Committee then took up a draft resolution on Supporting efforts to end obstetric fistula (document A/C.3/67/L.22/Rev.1), introduced by the representative of Senegal, on behalf of the African Group. She said 3.5 million women suffered from obstetric fistula, suffering from stigma and discrimination, which in turn, led to poverty and low self-esteem. It was among the leading causes of maternal mortality. With limited or no access to healthcare, children often died in child birth.

"The resolution is about saving the lives of these women and girls," she said, which urged a renewed focus on that front. If Millennium Development Goal 5 (improve maternal health) was to be achieved, the international community must ensure access to affordable and quality healthcare services to meet the needs of women and girls. "If we do not speak up for these women and girls, Mr. Chairman, then who will?" she asked. The African Group thanked all delegations for the constructive spirit shown during the negotiations. She hoped the text would be adopted with overwhelming support, as it had been in previous years.

Peru's delegate said his Government would determine whether the text was consistent with its internal legislation. Peru's constitution recognized the right to life from the moment of conception and abortion was a crime. He confirmed his country's position on sexual and reproductive rights.

The United States' delegate, speaking in a general statement, said the text acknowledged that protection of women's reproductive rights played a key role in combating obstetric fistula. It was only by protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights that safe and healthy environments could be offered to women. Reproductive rights, as described in the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, and in many resolutions since, provided the foundation for global efforts. She strongly supported the resolution and would work to foster implementation of the Conference. Also, the United States understood child marriage to signify forced and early marriage.

The Committee then approved by consensus the draft resolution on Supporting efforts to end obstetric fistula.

By its terms, the Assembly would stress the need to address the social issues contributing to obstetric fistula, such as poverty, lack of education for women and girls and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health. The Assembly would call on

States to take all measures to ensure the right to women and girls to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, including sexual and reproductive health, and develop sustainable health systems, with a view to ensuring access without discrimination.

By other terms, the Assembly would urge States to enforce laws ensuring that marriage was entered into only with the free and full consent of spouses. States and relevant United Nations agencies would be called on to redouble efforts to improve maternal health by making obstetric fistula treatment geographically and financially accessible, investing in health systems, ensuring equitable coverage, strengthening health systems so they provided services to prevent obstetric fistula, and mobilizing funds to provide free or subsidized maternal health care and obstetric fistula repair. The Assembly would also call for designating 23 May as the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula.

After action, Denmark's delegate, on behalf of the Nordic countries, welcomed the text's approval, saying obstetric fistula led to physical and social harm. Between 2 and 3.5 million women and girls suffered from it and his delegation was committed to improving maternal health. The most effective way to achieve Goal 5 was by ensuring universal access to family planning, skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care. Obstetric fistula would only be eliminated if women were able to make informed decisions about their reproductive lives. Reproductive rights were highly relevant in the resolution. He said women's reproductive rights had been at the centre of the development agenda for decades, and reaffirmed in a number of international agreements in the last 20 years.

The representative of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See reaffirmed his reservation to all references to gender, sexual and reproductive health and the expression "reproductive rights". Abortion should never be considered a means of family planning. He reiterated that "sexual and reproductive health" and "representative rights" were never to be understood as support for abortion. It was important to recall each child's right to integral human development. States must uphold the rights of parents vis-à-vis the upbringing of their children. By gender he understood it to mean "male" and "female".

Kenya's delegate was delighted by the text's adoption by consensus, as it recognized the links between obstetric fistula and poverty, malnutrition, early child bearing and gender discrimination. Many cases were due to lack of health facilities and trained medical personnel, among other reasons. There was a need to prioritize an end obstetric fistula. For its part, Kenya had made investments to develop its health system, but assistance was needed. The situation was exacerbated by weak infrastructure and the drain of health service workers to developed countries.

He said the only way for women and girls to enjoy the highest health standards was if obstetric fistula was recognized as a priority. He urged States to intensify technical support. He also urged action to deal with maternal, newborn and child health through the provision of pre- and post-natal care, and obstetric and newborn care, among other things. Awareness also must be raised.

Chile's delegate had joined consensus on the text, saying life was protected from conception to death in his country's constitution. No part of the draft resolution could be understood as Chile's acceptance of abortion. His Government would continue to approach obstetric fistula from that perspective.

Taking the floor to clarify her country's position on the draft resolution entitled Human rights and unilateral coercive measures (document A/C.3/67/L.38) Malawi's delegate said her vote to abstain was a mistake. Her country favoured that text.