

Crimes against humanity

Introduction of draft resolution A/C.6/74/L.21

Luke Tang (co-coordinator)

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the Bureau, draft resolution A/C.6/74/L.21, entitled "crimes against humanity". The draft resolution is being presented under agenda item 79, "Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its seventy-first session".

I wish to recall that the Commission, at its seventy-first session held earlier this year, adopted on second reading the draft articles on prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity, and recommended the elaboration of a convention by the General Assembly or by an international conference of plenipotentiaries on the basis of these draft articles. I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Commission and the Special Rapporteur, Professor Sean Murphy, for concluding their work on this topic.

My fellow coordinator, Mr. Giorgi Mikeladze and I conducted several rounds of informal consultations to develop a draft resolution that would reflect the views of delegations on how best to proceed with the draft articles.

The draft resolution presently before the Sixth Committee represents the outcome of those consultations. It comprises four preambular and three operative paragraphs, which draw on the practice of the General Assembly in dealing with instruments prepared by the Commission.

I shall now briefly run through the contents of the draft resolution. The preambular paragraphs refer to the Commission's report, notes the recommendation of the Commission, and emphasizes the continuing importance of the codification and progressive development of international law. The preambular paragraphs also recognize the need to prevent and punish crimes against humanity, which are among the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole.

In the operative paragraphs, the General Assembly expresses its appreciation to the Commission for its continuing contribution to the codification and progressive development of international law, and takes note of the draft articles as presented by the Commission.

In the final operative paragraph, the General Assembly decides to continue its work on this item at its next session, and to continue examining the recommendation of the Commission.

Mr. Chair,

A total of seven rounds of informal consultations were held on this draft resolution, and many hours were spent in this very chamber by a significant number of delegations deliberating and negotiating the text of the resolution. This reflects the level of interest that this topic has

generated amongst delegations. We believe that these discussions were useful in allowing delegations to exchange their views and ideas, and to better understand each other's positions and perspectives. In the end, it was clear that delegations would benefit from more time, and that the best course of action was to continue this conversation at the next session. It is therefore our hope, as coordinators of this resolution, that delegations will make good use of the time they have between now and the next session to find even more common ground. Negotiations at the United Nations are seldom easy, but that, we believe, is one of the hallmarks of multilateralism – that delegations would take the time to sit down with one another, to express their interests and concerns, but more importantly, to genuinely seek to understand the views of others, and to work together to find a mutually acceptable solution. We believe that this spirit of collegiality has served us well at this session, and will continue to do so in the future.

Mr. Chair,

Before concluding, I wish to take this opportunity, on behalf of myself and Giorgi, to sincerely thank delegations for their constructive engagement, as well as for their patience, during the many hours of our negotiations. We also wish to extend our deepest appreciation to our colleagues from the Secretariat, in particular to Huw, Arnold and Shin Yi, for their constant and dependable support over the past weeks.

Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, it is our assessment that the text of the draft resolution currently before this Committee reflects the common view of all delegations on how best to proceed at this point in time. As such, we commend it to the Sixth Committee for its consideration and recommend that it be adopted without a vote.

Thank you.