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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 13 June 2016, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Charles..... (Trinidad and Tobago)

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The meeting was called to order at 12.15 p.m.

Agenda item 5: Election of the officers of the Main Committees (*continued*)

1. **The Chair** said that the meeting had been convened for the purpose of continuing and concluding the election of the officers of the Committee. The nominations of Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Turbék (Hungary) and Mr. Katota (Zambia) for the three offices of Vice-Chair had been endorsed by the Group of Asia-Pacific States, the Group of Eastern European States and the Group of African States, respectively, and the nomination of Mr. Medina Mejías (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) for the office of Rapporteur had been endorsed by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

2. *Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Turbék (Hungary) and Mr. Katota (Zambia) were elected Vice-Chairs and Mr. Medina Mejías (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

3. **Mr. Danon** (Israel) conveyed the condolences of the Government and people of Israel to the families which had lost loved ones in the recent terrorist attack in Florida.

4. As incoming Chair of the Sixth Committee, he looked forward to working with all member States to promote the values and ideals of the United Nations and advance the agenda and goals of international law, which represented a shared commitment and guide for meeting the numerous critical challenges facing the international community. The Committee must therefore continue to advance and develop international law. He was committed to continuing the Committee's tradition of constructive work.

5. However, he regretted that morning's attempt to hijack the selection process of the Committee, which contravened the core values of the institution. As stated in the Charter of the United Nations, the development of friendly relations among nations and the achievement of international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character were among the purposes of the Organization, and he pledged to devote his efforts to those goals. He was proud to be the first Israeli elected to serve as Chair of one of the Main Committees of the United Nations, and was grateful for the support the he and the Group of Western European and Other States had received.

6. **Mr. Alyemany** (Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that the Group strongly objected to the nomination of Israel to chair the Sixth Committee. Israel was a violator of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law, as well as other international norms and relevant United Nations resolutions. By flouting the authority of the United Nations and not respecting its resolutions and decisions, Israel undermined the credibility of the Organization and its agencies. Given the long record of killing, displacement and persecution on the part of Israel, it was ineligible to preside over the Committee responsible for such legal issues as the rule of law at the local and international levels, State responsibility for illegal international acts, the status of the two protocols (relating to the protection of victims of armed conflict) to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, the application of universal jurisdiction, and legislation concerning cross-border aquifers.

7. Israel considered itself above the law and beyond accountability for its acts against the Palestinian and other Arab peoples in the occupied territories. Giving Israel the privilege of chairing the Committee would only encourage it to continue those policies. Israel should instead have been compelled to end its occupation of Arab territories and its systematic violations of international law.

8. In the regrettable absence of an alternative endorsed candidate from the Western European and Other States Group, the call by the Group of Arab States for a secret ballot would serve to forcefully express its rejection of the nomination of Israel and to demonstrate that Israel's election to the position was not unanimous.

9. **Ms. Stener** (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Western European and Other States Group, expressed the Group's concern and disappointment regarding the Arab Group's call for a vote in the previous meeting of the Committee (see [A/C.6/70/SR.30](#)). Challenging a candidate endorsed by a regional Group was contrary to the norms and established practices of the United Nations, and set an unfortunate precedent for future elections by enabling future challenges to such candidates. No previous Committee Chair had ever been selected by a vote; her Group had always fully respected the endorsements of other regional Groups for the Bureaux of the Main Committees, and had

refrained from objecting to or targeting a particular member State or regional Group for any reason.

10. While reiterating the unfortunate precedent set by the balloting, she was pleased to note that a considerable majority of member States had voted for her Group's endorsed candidate for Chair of the Committee.

11. **Mr. Begeç** (Turkey) said that in the light of the fact that Member States had the right to request votes for the elections of Chairs of the Main Committees, in line with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, his delegation did not align itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States. He joined other delegations in condemning the recent terrorist attack in Orlando, and in expressing condolences to the victims.

12. **Mr. Pressman** (United States of America) congratulated the representative of Israel on his election as Chair, and looked forward to a very productive session of the Committee under his leadership.

13. Citing a pattern of bias against Israel in previous elections in other main Committees, he expressed strong disappointment that a vote had once again been held in the present case regarding the candidacy of the Israeli permanent representative endorsed by the Group of Western European and Other States. The Sixth Committee had always selected its Chairs by acclamation, and it should have done so on the present occasion as well. He called for a United Nations that was a model of equal treatment and not discrimination; one that included Israel and sought to bring it closer, not one that systematically pushed Israel away.

14. The work of the Sixth Committee was critical to the progressive development of international law. His delegation looked forward to working with the Committee under the leadership of the Israeli permanent representative, and was confident that as Chair of the Committee, the representative of Israel would serve with the utmost objectivity and commitment to international law and norms.

15. **Mr. Dibaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation strongly condemned the recent terrorist attack in Orlando, and offered its condolences to the families of the victims and the people of the United States of America.

16. His delegation greatly regretted the election of the representative of the Israeli regime as Chair of the Committee, as that would bestow the leadership of the legal Committee of the General Assembly on the representative of a lawless, law-averse and law-breaking regime.

17. For decades, the United Nations had repeatedly condemned Israel for its illegal occupation of the land of Palestine and other countries in the region, and for its flagrant violations of international law. As fully documented by the reports prepared under United Nations mandates, Israel had incessantly violated the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for the territorial integrity of States and the self-determination of peoples, as well as the norms of international law, humanitarian law, refugee law, and the human rights of the Palestinian people. Numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and other bodies of the United Nations system had deplored the criminal acts of Israel and demanded their immediate cessation. Over the years, Israel had consistently responded to those legitimate demands of the international community with denial and defiance, and had intransigently continued its criminal acts and policies.

18. Israel had been deaf but not mute, repeatedly attacking the United Nations and its member States for their defence of the Palestinian people and for their justified criticisms of the Israeli regime. Instead of changing course, that regime had repeatedly accused the United Nations and its organs of being anti-Semitic, biased and partial. Bestowing the leadership of the Committee on Israel was a mockery of the principles of the Charter and the ideals upon which the Organization was founded. He therefore reiterated his delegation's disappointment with the decision taken by the Sixth Committee, as one that undermined the credibility of that important body of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 3.20 p.m.