

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (spoke in Spanish): At the outset, I would like to welcome the presence of Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, Mr. Rodolfo Nin Novoa, at this meeting today. It is a privilege to have him in the Council.

I would also like to acknowledge the statements by the Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Ms. Christine Beerli, and Mr. Bruno Stagno Ugarte, Deputy Executive Director for Advocacy of Human Rights Watch. The three briefings were very important, not only because they touched the hearts of those of us in this Chamber, but they also touched the crux of the problems that our Organization in general and the Security Council in particular are facing in this area.

Unfortunately, war has taken on a brutal dimension. Practices and dynamics have developed that, according to the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/2017/414), have affected the lives of 65 million innocent people in various parts the world. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Yemen, over 21 million people need assistance or protection to satisfy their basic needs as a result of the conflict. In Syria, 13.5 million people need humanitarian assistance and 6.3 million have been displaced. In Libya, 2.4 million people need humanitarian assistance. In the same vein, the number of civilian fatalities — both because of terrorist attacks and confrontations among forces and parties to the different conflicts around the world — has increased owing to the indiscriminate bombing by various coalitions of hospitals, medical facilities, humanitarian assistance facilities, religious sites and even wedding celebrations, which are of no military importance but remain targets nonetheless. In accordance with the information provided by the Secretary-General in his report, in 2016 there were 108 attacks on medical facilities in Syria, 17 attacks in the Central African Republic and 19 attacks in Yemen. Moreover, the report indicates that every month around 30,000 people are injured in Syria alone, which is the equivalent of almost 42 victims per hour.

In that connection, on 3 May 2016, at the initiative of Uruguay, Egypt, Japan, Spain and New Zealand, the Security Council adopted resolution 2286 (2016), which seeks to protect civilians in armed conflict; protect humanitarian personnel and guarantee their deployment with complete security; and protect humanitarian infrastructure, among other things. However, despite the resolution, we still bear witness to violations of international humanitarian law through attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and denial of access to medical assistance in armed conflicts, which is often not the result of an error, but rather a method of war. We urge States to ratify the Rome Statute, first in order to ensure its universality, and secondly to end impunity for such attacks.

We believe it important to recall here the Declaration made by the Heads of State and Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at their seventeenth Summit, held in September 2016 on Margarita Island, Venezuela, which condemned the increasing attacks on humanitarian personnel and related facilities. We support it, needless to say, and firmly condemn all attacks and threats against civilians, hospitals, health facilities, water and power infrastructure, as well as attacks on the doctors who give their lives to help civilians trapped in armed conflicts, in what is coldbloodedly referred to as “collateral damage” but which actually constitutes a war crime whose perpetrators must be brought to justice.

We urge all parties to any conflict to protect the civilian population and their property and health facilities, as well as humanitarian missions deployed on the ground. International humanitarian law and its principles of impartiality, neutrality, humanity and independence were created in response to violence in armed conflicts and must be complied with in political and military disputes. Bolivia calls on the international community to take concrete action and to

implement the commitments made by all members of the Security Council and of the United Nations generally to ensuring the safety of civilians in armed conflicts, especially women and children, who are the most vulnerable in situations of extreme violence. Bolivia also advocates for using peaceful means to resolve disputes — the use of good offices, preventive diplomacy, multilateralism, non-interference and respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States — all of which are universal principles recognized by the international community and are effective tools for avoiding the scourge of war.

In that context, we call on Member States to support the Agenda for Humanity proposed by the United Nations, which is based on a five-point plan to guide the international community's efforts to alleviate humanitarian suffering and reduce risk and vulnerability. The five points are, first, preventing and, of course, ending conflicts; respecting international humanitarian law; ensuring that no one is left behind; changing the way we work so as to meet people's needs; and investing in humanity. That cannot be achieved as long as armed conflicts continue to erupt and innocent civilians continue to be seen as military targets, and as long as technology is used for war and destruction rather than peace.

The relevance or uselessness of this Organization, its success or failure, is measured by our ability to save lives. Every life lost, every person who is wounded or displaced, every refugee embodies our failure. We must share best practices and gather more and better information to prevent such events from happening again. We must bring those responsible to justice, punish them and put an end to impunity. We must work on the underlying causes of conflict in the areas of development and civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and we must strengthen the rule of law and institutions. But apart from all of that, as you rightly said, Mr. President, we should stop feeding the monster of war, the enormous business of war. We must end interventionism and the logic of regime change, which have brought humankind so much pain.