The General Assembly considered agenda item 15 on 18 December 2013. Thirteen speakers took the floor during the general discussion: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam (on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)), El Salvador, Iran, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Thailand, the Delegation of the European Union and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The representatives of Lithuania, speaking on behalf of the European Union, Israel, the United States and Canada also took the floor to explain their position on the resolutions.

Under this item, the Assembly adopted three resolutions by consensus, namely “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace” (A/68/L.28), “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace” (A/68/L.30) and “A world against violence and violence extremism” (A/68/L.31). While A/68/L.28 and A/68/L.30 are draft resolutions submitted annually under this item, draft resolution A/68/L.31 was a new text, submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**General discussion**

All speakers reaffirmed their support to activities carried out by the UN system to promote dialogue between different religions and cultures, tolerance, mutual respect and better understanding of each other’s views and beliefs. They expressed appreciation for the work of UNESCO, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, as well as other UN entities and initiatives in pursuit of understanding and tolerance. The high number of member States cosponsoring resolutions also testifies to global engagement on this issue: over 100 co-sponsored the resolution on the culture of peace and over 40 co-sponsored the resolution on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, including for the first time Japan and some European countries. The commitment expressed by delegations from Asia was particularly noteworthy.

In general, participants pointed out the need for social inclusion, formal and non-formal education and support to the youth, as well as to migrants and women as means of promoting a culture of peace in society, stressing the connection between peace, stability and development. They also recognized the increasingly important role of the media in eliminating hatred and prejudices while promoting better understanding among peoples.

Brunei Darussalam on behalf of ASEAN, urged for increased education of people, especially the youth, to respect those from different religious and cultural backgrounds through the use of information and communications technology. Malaysia reaffirmed its commitment to the Global Movement of Moderates (GMM) which can complement the work of the UN system at various levels in the promotion of the culture of peace. Kuwait and Qatar stressed the need to promote respect for cultural differences, mediation and non-violence as means of ensuring a culture of peace, which should be considered as an extension of democracy.

The links between peace and mutual understanding and the realization of development goals was emphasized by Morocco, cautioning that the goals of peace could not be realized unless a global
partnership was established to help all countries achieve the Millennium Goals. Referring to the activities reported in the General Secretary report on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, the representative of Morocco was of the view that additional UN actors could provide useful contributions to this report, in particular UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM.

The idea of consolidating several reporting requirements into a single document under the agenda item “culture of peace”, as proposed in the reports of the Secretary-General, was supported.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies expressed its strong commitment to promoting social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace and highlighted the vulnerabilities of three specific groups in this regard, namely women, people with disabilities and migrants.

**Draft resolution A/68/L.28 “Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace”**

Bangladesh, the author of the draft resolution, explained that the text had been technically updated from previous years and contained a few new elements, in particular a reference to the role that peace should play in the post-2015 agenda. It also reiterates its request made to the President of the General Assembly to consider convening a high-level forum on culture of peace on or around 13 September.

**Draft resolution A/68/L.30 “Promotion of interreligious and Intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”**

Pakistan and The Philippines presented draft resolution L.30 by which the Assembly encourages Member States to consider initiatives identifying areas for practical action in all sectors and levels of society for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The co-authors stressed that the text built upon nearly one decade of presenting and negotiating resolutions on this topic at the General Assembly and contained a more inclusive perspective that would allow the international community to more widely and sustainably address common challenges.

The text welcomes the launch of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), which the Assembly proclaimed last year. While its traditional focus on interfaith dialogue remains, the text has also been opened to new dimensions, including the cultural dimension and the role of civil society with, for the first time this year, a reference to the positive contribution of “individuals” to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

**Draft resolution A/68/L.31 “A world against violence and violent extremism”**

Iran introduced draft resolution A/68/L.31 by which the General Assembly urges all Member States to unite against violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations as well as sectarian violence. The text encourages efforts by leaders to discuss within their communities the causes of violent extremism and discrimination and to evolve strategies to address them, including by strengthening ties between communities and emphasizing common bond and interests. The text also stresses the importance of full respect for human rights in these endeavors and of the prevention of violence against women.

By this text, the Secretary-General is mandated to report to the General Assembly at its 70th session on the implementation of the resolution and to recommend ways and means by which the
United Nations system and the Secretariat could assist Member States in generating public awareness about the dangers of intolerance as well as fostering understanding and non-violence.

The representative of Iran also stressed in his intervention the role that the General Assembly could play in breaking the cycles of violence.

In explanation of position on the resolution, the representative of Lithuania, speaking on behalf of the European Union, thanked Iran for its constructive and open spirit during consultations and emphasized the need to fight violent extremism. The representative of Israel expressed the view that Iran’s policy in the Middle East contradicted the words and purposes of the draft resolution. The United States and Canada called for practical steps by all, including by Iran, to implement the resolution and to comply with international human rights obligations.