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President: Mr. Rybakov (Vice-President). (Belarus)

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In the absence of Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Mr. Rybakov (Belarus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*)
(E/2019/64, E/2019/65, E/2019/66, E/2019/68
and E/2019/71)

(a) Ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (*continued*)

General debate (continued)

1. **The President** invited the ministerial meeting to resume its general debate on the theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”.

2. **Mr. Edmond** (Haiti), Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship, speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the essential requirements for sustainable development were poverty eradication, the promotion of sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and the protection and management of the natural resource base. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development could easily be undermined by the region’s high debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratio. Although most CARICOM member States were classified as middle-income countries and were relatively highly placed on the human development index, they remained burdened by their small, vulnerable economies, a situation exacerbated by their high dependence on international trade, lack of economies of scale, limited product and market diversification, and vulnerability to natural disasters and the impact of climate change. A reassessment of international development cooperation allocation criteria was therefore needed to account for the multidimensional nature of development.

3. For small island developing States, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda could not be separated from that of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway). Member States were encouraged to participate in the high-level review of the Samoa Pathway in September 2019. The global Goals must be aligned with national priorities and firmly anchored in national plans. Given the importance of high-quality, reliable and timely data and analysis in that regard, dedicated support for strengthening national statistical systems and offices for data collection and disaggregation was essential. CARICOM urged the United Nations development

system to support national development priorities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in order to ensure that no one was left behind.

4. **Mr. Arriola Ramírez** (Paraguay), Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, said that the challenges faced by the 32 landlocked developing countries, such as remoteness, lack of direct access to the ocean and isolation from world markets, were exacerbated by inadequate infrastructure, cumbersome border crossing procedures, structural handicaps and limited capacities. Given those challenges, the implementation of the principle of leaving no one behind and the fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goal 10 on reducing inequality within and among countries required special attention by Member States. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the six priorities outlined in the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 must be fully met.

5. The national reports prepared for the mid-term review of the Vienna Programme of Action, and the three regional meetings held, showed that there had not been sufficient progress over the last five years to meet the Programme’s objectives or achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. One third of the population in landlocked developing countries was still living in extreme poverty, and undernutrition and food insecurity were widespread. Despite the importance of trade for achieving sustainable development, landlocked developing countries still accounted for a very low percentage of world trade, which had further fallen in recent years. In addition, although infrastructure was a source of competitive advantage that was vital to inclusive and sustainable development, the landlocked developing countries faced a huge infrastructure deficit. Investment in high-quality, accessible, affordable, reliable and resilient infrastructure was therefore vital.

6. With regard to Goal 13 on combating climate change and its impacts, landlocked developing countries continued to be vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and would require special assistance to support measures for adaptation and mitigation efforts and to develop climate-resilient transport infrastructure, in accordance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

7. **Ms. Young** (Belize), Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States, said that both Agenda 21, adopted in 1992, and the Millennium

Development Goals, just like the newly-minted Sustainable Development Goals, had promised poverty eradication in the context of sustainable development. Yet a quarter of a century after the launch of Agenda 21, inequalities had become more and more pronounced and planetary boundaries were close to being – if they had not already been – crossed. Against that backdrop, the situation faced by small island developing States illustrated the limited success of the sustainable development exercise undertaken. Based on the work carried out as part of the preparatory process for the high-level review of the Samoa Pathway, it was clear that those States faced challenges grossly disproportionate to their capacity, many of which resulted from an equally gross global dereliction of duty to the most vulnerable. Despite the grave situation that the small island developing States faced, the international community was still endlessly discussing a one-size-fits-all methodology for developing countries that simply did not work. Outdated and unrealistic mantras were constantly repeated, urging States to raise domestic resources, rely on existing instruments and equip governance mechanisms. Such an impractical set of solutions suggested that the specific circumstances of small island developing States were still not understood or appreciated.

8. The development of small island developing States should be as much a matter of action as it was of rhetoric. Climate action and ambition must be stepped up in line with the 1.5°C pathway, while access to concessional finance should be determined not only by static measures but also factors such as vulnerability and indebtedness. Support from the international community was needed for the re-evaluation of the eligibility criteria to account for the peculiarities of small island developing States seeking graduation from least developed country status and thereafter to ensure a smooth transition strategy. Disaster risk reduction required a systematic and holistic approach and the international community should work with small island developing States to develop a disaster fund or financial mechanism allowing countries to deal with liquidity gaps between disaster and recovery, as well as to address incidents from which recovery was impossible. In that regard, a monitoring framework would be vital. It was essential for States to transcend self-interest and engage with each other meaningfully and constructively within the framework of the United Nations. That was the only way forward for small island developing States and 2019 was the last opportunity to get it right.

9. **Mr. Skoknic Tapia** (Chile), Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of Older Persons, said

that the Council's 2019 theme, "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality", was relevant to older persons across the world. Given the projected increase in the number of older persons to 1.4 billion globally by 2030, an increase that would be particularly great and rapid in the developing world, more attention must be paid to the specific challenges affecting older persons as an integral part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Regarding Sustainable Development Goal 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all, increased access to education at a younger age would be beneficial to older persons in the long term and technology could also be used to reduce marginalization, loneliness and segregation between the ages. The crucial social and economic contributions of older persons, not only at work but in their families and communities, including through the preparation of the future labour force, should be recognized.

10. It was essential to mainstream ageing and the human rights of older persons into global agendas and make a concerted effort to promote a wide and equitable approach to policy integration. Ageing must be linked to other frameworks for social and economic development and human rights. The collection and analysis of reliable and internationally comparable data on older persons was important. Member States and the international community must design and implement policies and programmes, as well as devise national, regional and international legal frameworks that effectively and specifically promoted the full enjoyment of the human rights of older persons, particularly the right to a life free of discrimination and violence, and the possibility of actively participating in society and contributing to its development.

11. **Mr. Charwarth** (Austria), Deputy Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, said that, in order for the international community to meet the targets of the 2030 Agenda, science, technology and innovation would need to play a stronger role, which could be spearheaded by space technology. Research conducted by the Office for Outer Space Affairs showed that some 40 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goal targets benefited from the use of geolocation and earth observation satellites; that percentage was even higher if telecommunication satellites were included. The Office had therefore launched an initiative to raise awareness of the potential of space technology for sustainable development and to meet the increased demands for services. Other initiatives included a project that provided capacity-building and training for women and girls, facilitating access to science,

technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, particularly in relation to space technology, which addressed both Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5. Given the high market demand for a trained workforce in the STEM fields, developing such skills also improved employment prospects. Space was thus important for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8 on promoting economic growth and decent work for all.

12. Regarding Goal 13, the ability to share global climatic observations via satellites was essential to broad-scale monitoring of the planet. The Office had signed a joint declaration of interest to support the establishment of a space climate observatory for climate change monitoring. The United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response would directly benefit Member States in the implementation of adaption and mitigation measures. The Office's contribution to Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development was illustrated by the considerable increase in membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space over the past five years. Furthermore, the Office regularly organized workshops on space law, ran inclusive research and educational initiatives, and had engaged in a cooperative venture with the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency, in steps towards the fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goal 17 on strengthening global partnership and Sustainable Development Goal 10 on reducing inequality within and among countries. With a view to promoting the long-term sustainable use of the space environment, the Group called for further discussions on guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and urged the Secretary-General to consider whether the resources allocated to the Office were sufficient, taking into consideration the need to create a "Space2030" agenda, as outlined in General Assembly resolution 73/6.

13. **Mr. Remengesau, Jr.** (Palau), President of the Republic, said that Sustainable Development Goal 13 could not be reviewed in isolation, as the impacts of climate change – and the world's inadequate progress towards limiting global warming to 1.5°C – threatened to undermine or even reverse all the other progress made in implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The repercussions of climate change directly affected his country's tourism-based economy, also hampering the fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goal 8. In the context of Goal 16, climate change also threatened the resilience of societies and the stability of the international order.

14. The response to climate change demonstrated the importance of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

as a whole-of-society response requiring the Government to build effective governing institutions, ensure the active engagement of youth and persons with disabilities and ensure that no one was left behind. His Government was embarking on an energy transition that would enable it to meet its nationally determined contribution targets under the Paris Agreement of 45 per cent renewable energy, through building the world's largest microgrid. That represented an opportunity to increase energy access and security, as well as to catalyse the growth of skilled and quality jobs, in support of Sustainable Development Goal 8, and reduce social and economic inequalities, in line with Goal 10. It would also require investments in the education system to develop human capital and reduce the brain drain, as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 4.

15. To achieve all those objectives, as set out in Sustainable Development Goal 17 it was important to enable access to the means of implementation and build deeper partnerships and forms of cooperation with both traditional development partners and newer South-South partners. The private sector was increasingly recognized as a vital partner in sustainable development. For example, the energy transition plan of Palau was only possible thanks to a public-private partnership that provided a financial model appropriate to its island context. Without such support, Palau would be unable to achieve the goal of empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. He urged all stakeholders to stop describing the problem and instead stop the problem.

16. **Mr. Avinyan** (Armenia), Deputy Prime Minister, said that one year after his country had presented its first voluntary national review, it had taken important steps towards establishing a robust democratic framework. The advancement of "smart development" was a strategic priority for action on its domestic and international agenda, which included advancing sustainable development with a particular focus on information and communication technologies; amplifying the growth of start-ups; fostering innovation; and investing in young people's skills and entrepreneurship. Armenia would host the twenty-third World Congress on Information Technology, which would bring together prominent industry leaders, policymakers, thinkers and innovators to debate key issues such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, the impact of information and communication technology in education, women in technology and other issues of global interest. All relevant stakeholders were encouraged to participate.

17. Given its status as a middle-income landlocked developing country located in one of the most

seismically active regions of the world, Armenia was familiar with environmental challenges, natural disasters and their impact on human societies. His Government therefore emphasized the importance of integrating economic and environmental policies. Through successful cooperation, it had also implemented programmes for energy efficiency and climate smart technologies, representing steps towards low-emission and climate-resilient sustainable development.

18. **Mr. Askarov** (Kyrgyzstan), Vice Prime Minister, said that his Government was committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and had already established an institutional mechanism under the Office of the Prime Minister to monitor the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Green economy principles had been streamlined in nearly all guidance documents, development programmes and action plans, which reflected national priorities in the context of the 2030 Agenda, focusing above all on the needs, rights and freedoms of the people and related structural government reforms.

19. His Government's social and economic policies, together with targeted quality of life improvements, had enabled Kyrgyzstan to join the list of lower-middle-income countries and to be ranked as a country in the medium human development group. The country's progress with respect to establishing a more business-friendly climate and strengthening democratic processes had been confirmed by indicators published by respected international institutions. Having recognized the importance of fair elections to sustainable development, Kyrgyzstan had been the first State member of the Commonwealth of Independent States to use biometrics in its voting system in 2015.

20. Although Kyrgyzstan had become a sovereign State relatively recently, the belief that development must be in harmony with nature was reflected in the centuries-old history and culture of the Kyrgyz people, who saw the obligation to protect the environment as a duty towards future generations in Kyrgyzstan and in the world at large. Rather than take narrow or short-term measures, the Government was therefore pursuing measures that would have a global and lasting impact. The ecosystems of all countries in the Central Asia region were closely bound by the transboundary river systems fed by glacier melt from the mountains in Kyrgyzstan, as well as by the air streams cooled by those glaciers and purified by the trees growing on those mountain slopes. In view of the impact of its ecosystem around the world, Kyrgyzstan needed more vigorous support from its partners for its nature conservation efforts.

21. **Mr. Ahmadov** (Azerbaijan), Deputy Prime Minister, said that his country was among the ten most actively reforming countries in the world. The nationalization of the Sustainable Development Goals and their inclusion in the country's development agenda was key to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To that end, in 2017 a mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support strategy involving various United Nations agencies had been organized to provide technical and political support to the Government in adapting the Sustainable Development Goals to national priorities. His Government had prioritized 17 Goals, 88 targets and 119 indicators for sustainable development. The Baku Forum on Sustainable Development had played a significant role in promoting implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Azerbaijan.

22. Work was being carried out in Azerbaijan to provide quality education, decent work and economic growth; reduce inequalities; fight climate change; strengthen peace; and promote effective and fair institutions of global cooperation. In the first half of 2019, the minimum wage and minimum pension had been doubled in Azerbaijan. There had also been a significant increase in State support for the almost 1 million internally displaced persons in the country. The unresolved military conflict that had arisen as a result of the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan, which had resulted in the occupation of some 20 per cent of the latter's territory, was a hindrance to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals. More than 1 million people, deprived of their permanent residence in Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent regions of Azerbaijan and their homes in Armenia, continued to be denied the right to a safe and dignified return to their homeland.

23. **Ms. Dostálová** (Czechia), Minister for Regional Development, emphasizing the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 16 to the 2030 Agenda as a whole, said that the closure of the first cycle of the Agenda's implementation provided an important opportunity for the international community to reform follow-up processes at the global level. International cooperation would be crucial to achieving the Goals' commitments. The high-level political forum on sustainable development was a successful format that was central to efforts to achieve the Goals. Her Government strongly supported building on its success and wanted to ensure that the efficiency and accountability of its review processes was further strengthened, with broad stakeholder participation.

24. The 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda were closely connected because cities played a crucial role in the quality of life of most of the global population, with the potential to contribute to at least

half of the Goals. Her Government was actively involved in international activities aimed at urban development. It had also participated actively in the European regional forum, a preparatory platform feeding into the high-level political forum. Her Government supported the work of the regional commissions, which would be addressed during the United Nations development system reform and would play an important role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

25. **Ms. Kubayi-Ngubane** (South Africa), Minister of Tourism, said that it was important to acknowledge the synergies between the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement. The Goals must be treated as a single system in an interlinked and integrated manner, with efforts also focusing on the means of implementation contained in each target, including by keeping track of the indicators.

26. Climate change was the biggest threat to development, and it disproportionately affected developing countries, which were far less responsible for emissions and pollution than the developed countries. Global warming jeopardized the economic foundations and social fabric of Member States. Development cooperation must therefore focus on enhancing the connection between the Goals' targets and climate action. Although developing countries had taken primary responsibility for their own development, developed countries should still complement their work and deliver on their official development assistance commitments of 0.7 per cent of gross national income.

27. **Mr. Hasbani** (Lebanon), Deputy Prime Minister, recalling that his country had the most refugees per capita in the world, said that his Government had engaged multiple stakeholders in an all-of-society approach to begin the development of a 2030 strategy for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It aimed to involve young people, local authorities, parliamentarians and others in developing the strategy because localization of the Goals and commitment at all social levels would greatly help their achievement. Thematic groups had been established to emphasize interlinkages among the Goals and enable a cooperative environment to ensure full ownership of the strategy during its implementation.

28. The strategy would be a platform and a road map out of the country's current crisis that consecutive governments would adapt as an executive development plan, while parliamentarians would ensure that the right legislative programme was put in place. His Government strongly supported the strategy and had

created a national Sustainable Development Goals committee chaired by the Prime Minister, as well as a parliamentary committee and a global compact network engaging the private sector and wider society. An infrastructure capital investment programme, municipal development programmes and an economic development strategy, all of which had already been established, would be integral to the 2030 strategy.

29. **Mr. Santana** (Dominican Republic), Minister of Economy, Planning and Development, said that his Government had substantially increased public spending on education, promoted alliances with the private sector, civil service organizations and academia, and seen success in the areas of clean energy, the green economy, sustainable tourism and social cohesion. Enrolment in early education had risen significantly but was concentrated in urban areas. Basic education was close to 94 per cent and had gender parity although women were overrepresented at the secondary and tertiary levels. While challenges remained in terms of learning achievements, most schools had adopted the extended school day in line with State policy. His Government had implemented a massive literacy plan and expanded comprehensive care for early infancy; it was also applying policies to support children from vulnerable families.

30. Work was being done to develop tourism and boost its sustainability. The country enjoyed significant foreign direct investment and its economic growth had been among the strongest in Latin America; tourism and family remittances were important sources of income. However, significant challenges persisted regarding the extremely low tax-to-GDP ratio and relatively large public debt repayments, as well as the high proportion of young people not in employment, education or training.

31. **Mr. Brodjonegoro** (Indonesia), Minister for National Development Planning, said that although considerable progress had been made towards implementation of the Goals, such progress was uneven and transformational changes were needed to achieve the targets of the 2030 Agenda. In Indonesia all stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society and academia, were involved in implementation of the Goals, which had been incorporated into national and subnational development priorities, planning and financing. The Goals had multiplying benefits. In Indonesia, for example, inequality reduction had led to greater access to education, more inclusive economic growth and more employment opportunities. In view of the central importance of financing to the implementation of the Goals, resource mobilization must be significantly scaled up. His Government was

improving the tax-to-GDP ratio and exploring and introducing innovative sources of financing, including blended finance, public-private partnerships, faith-based charity and crowdfunding.

32. Calling on Member States to pledge concrete action at the forthcoming high-level meetings of the General Assembly, he said that, in order for the Goals to be achieved, global partnerships must urgently be strengthened and relevant stakeholders must be encouraged to participate in a more inclusive fashion. Responsive and adaptive policies were crucial to effectively addressing challenges such as climate change and rapid technological transformation.

33. **Mr. Pernia** (Philippines), Secretary for Socioeconomic Planning, said that more efforts and resources were needed to fully implement the 2030 Agenda. The 2019–2023 United Nations-Philippines partnership framework for sustainable development shifted the nature of the engagement of the United Nations system in his country to a strategic partnership defined by the interrelating areas of people, prosperity, planet and peace, all of which contributed to achieving national mid- and long-term priority development goals.

34. Although the economy had grown in a rapid and uninterrupted fashion in recent years, much work was still to be done to empower every Filipino to live a comfortable, secure and peaceful life. Innovation was required but, equally, good programmes and policies must be maintained. His Government had therefore institutionalized programmes that had been proven to promote social inclusion, quality of life, human capital development and social protection. One such initiative was the conditional cash transfer programme, which had been helping to reduce poverty and inequality. His Government was investing heavily in infrastructure in order to promote connectivity and spur regional development while poorer local governments received support to build access roads, develop water systems and provide reproductive health services, among other projects.

35. **Mr. Szijjártó** (Hungary), Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade said that, as Hungary was a mid-sized, landlocked country with an open economy and no natural resources, its continued economic growth would mostly be based on the creativity and diligence of its citizens and would therefore require ever greater numbers of highly skilled workers. The Hungarian economy was changing in dimension as the country reached full employment and innovation was becoming increasingly important, leading to particular significance for Goals 4, 8 and 10.

36. His Government enacted policy based on three principles: all willing workers deserved jobs; any financial outlay by the State required reciprocal effort by the individual; and the right to education and better skills was universal. Recent strong growth – the highest in the European Union during the first quarter of 2019 – was due to a low flat tax on corporate and personal income; reduction of the tax burden on companies for their workforce; and structural reform of the higher education system, including private sector involvement in school curricula. His Government had also enacted fiscal policies to support large families, such as a lifelong exemption from personal income tax for women bearing four or more children; State-funded child benefit for the first three years of a child's life; and free education from nursery to secondary level, including free school meals and books at the primary level. A total of 5,500 scholarships were also being provided for students from least developed countries and persecuted Christian communities in the Middle East.

37. Universal health coverage was clearly linked to the Goals but unfortunately it was becoming an extension of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Such a policy interfered with national competencies and failed to differentiate migrants by legal status, imposing obligations on sovereign countries and adding pressure on their health-care systems.

38. **Mr. Ulstein** (Norway), Minister of International Development, said that the 2030 Agenda was intended to work for those millions around the world who had no voice and had been left behind. Although much positive progress had been made, serious challenges remained, particularly in view of the 800 million people with disabilities in developing countries, rising food insecurity, and the 27 million people each year forced to flee their homes as a result of climate change or natural disasters. Their suffering would continue unless greater efforts were made to achieve the Goals, while the success of the commitment to leave no one behind would depend on accountable follow-up by all Member States.

39. The Sustainable Development Goals Advocates had clearly communicated that more resources would be needed to achieve the Goals, along with greater ownership and leadership and innovative public-private partnerships. Investment was needed in universal access to free, equitable and high-quality health care and education services and decent work for all, which, along with political commitment to good governance, were crucial to reducing poverty. As a staunch supporter of a rules-based international order, his delegation welcomed the steps taken to make the United Nations

system fit for purpose. It was within the international community's power to ensure universal enjoyment of equal rights and opportunities. With only ten years left for the achievement of the Goals, Norway strongly supported calls for action to inspire hope around the world and free millions from modern slavery and hunger, addressing the root causes of poverty through even stronger partnerships.

40. **Ms. Manastirliu** (Albania), Minister of Health and Social Welfare, underlining her country's commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a coherent and integrated fashion, said that achievement of the Goals in Albania would go hand in hand with ambitious reforms aimed at moving towards European integration. Reforms of the type envisaged in Goal 16 had created the conditions for a more effective, accountable and transparent national legal system and greater compliance with laws and regulations, marking a milestone in the fight against corruption, promoting the rule of law at a national level and ensuring equal access to justice for all.

41. Businesses thrived in peaceful and stable environments with effective institutions. Any failure to implement responsible business practices would increase business costs and risk, potentially leading to increased social tension and instability and even undermining the rule of law. Economic reforms would accelerate equitable growth while structural reforms would increase productivity, create jobs, and improve governance and public service provision. Domestic challenges had led to the institution of a broad reform programme focused on macroeconomic and fiscal sustainability, energy matters, territorial reform and financial sector stability. Her Government was particularly focused on the central importance of education to future generations.

42. Albania would continue its efforts to achieve the Goals in line with the national vision for 2030. Key steps were to prioritize Goals, set targets for 2030, including by defining intermediate targets for the next strategic planning framework, prepare a road map for achieving the Goals and mainstream the Goals into subnational plans.

43. **Mr. Elkin** (Israel), Minister of Environmental Protection, drawing attention to his country's high birth rate and large immigrant population, said that, despite its small size, Israel had become a centre for innovative and creative solutions and a focal point for expertise in health care, agriculture, economic inclusion, education and, above all, water. Water efficiency was substantially higher than the global average and per capita use had been reduced considerably through efficient

desalination, water loss reduction, sewage water reclamation and mass adoption of drip irrigation.

44. His Government had approved the incorporation of the Goals – the modern version of the Biblical command to safeguard the planet – into its national strategic goals. Member States were responsible for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and were held accountable by their methodology, parameters and reports. The Goals would be reached through innovation and cooperation.

45. **Mr. Costa** (Italy), Minister for Environment, Land and Sea Protection, said that the success of the 2030 Agenda depended on the ability of Member States to enhance cooperation on common goals in a holistic, balanced and integrated fashion using existing and future national instruments. In Italy, major civil society stakeholders were deeply involved in that process, their participation having been facilitated by the sustainable development forum recently launched in Naples. Such active participation was crucial to understand upcoming challenges and to promote awareness of accountability and ownership.

46. Climate change was the most important systemic risk for the global economy in the near future, while resilient ecosystems, access to water and health services, and food and energy security were among the prerequisites for socioeconomic development. His Government, through a participatory process, had drafted an integrated national energy and climate plan for the period to 2030, in line with national climate, energy and economic policy goals, and a process under way within the European Union framework would result in the adoption, by 2020, of a long-term development strategy for the period to 2050. Energy transition would be critical to achieve significant emission reductions. Emissions by the energy sector must be gradually reduced through environmental protection policies and support given to the millions who still did not have access to clean energy and electricity.

47. His country had made a bid to share the presidency of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in an innovative partnership with the United Kingdom. In that connection, it would host a forum for young people to share ideas and engage in debate. With a view to the Climate Action Summit 2019, it also wished to work on resilience, adaptation and nature-based solutions.

48. **Ms. Ubach Font** (Andorra), Minister for Foreign Affairs, noting that inclusiveness and equality were major priorities of Andorran national policy, said that multilateralism was the best way to raise global

awareness of the need to work together for sustainable development. In light of Goal 4, which was also a means of achieving all the other Goals, her Government had aimed to make education in human rights and democratic citizenship a key part of its educational policy. In line with the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the Andorran education system encouraged the principles of equality, including gender equality, equity and respect in an inclusive education model that was tailored to the diversity of children's needs. High-quality education for all was the best means of avoiding systemic discrimination against women. A new law on equality and non-discrimination had recently been adopted, based on the conviction that non-discrimination was the foundation of democracy and social justice. Her Government was committed to ongoing international efforts to guarantee a better life for children and had adopted a law on the rights of children and adolescents, focused on protecting them and ensuring their active participation in society.

49. **Ms. Elsaid** (Egypt), Minister of Planning, Follow-up and Administrative Reform, said that her country's sustainable development efforts were guided by its Vision 2030 programme, which had been launched in February 2016. The comprehensive framework provided for in that programme had been developed through a collaborative approach involving the Government, the private sector, civil society and all relevant partners. Special attention was paid to the needs of women and young people, and the programme took account of the need for social protection to cushion the impact of economic reform on low-income groups.

50. Egypt had instituted a number of legislative and institutional reforms to simplify the procedures for starting a business and encourage private-sector investment. Public investment in infrastructure had increased, notably in the renewable energy sector. The Suez Canal development project would contribute to the enhancement of global maritime commerce. The Government had also launched programmes to improve administrative governance and transform Egypt into a digital society.

51. With assistance from the United Nations Development Programme, Egypt was working to ensure that the benefits of development were extended to all parts of the country. Her Government was expanding its human and technical capacities for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and developing improved tools for measuring progress by exchanging expertise and best practices with other countries. In that connection, Egypt would be hosting the sixth International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities in October 2019.

52. Her Government placed a high priority on developing human capacities and skills for development. It was working to improve education, and also comprehensive health coverage. Egypt had just conducted the largest health survey in history as part of its campaign to eliminate hepatitis C and other endemic diseases.

53. **Mr. Zarif** (Islamic Republic of Iran), Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that, as the Secretary-General had pointed out in his report (E/2019/68), inequalities within and among nations continued to be a significant concern. To be sustainable, development must be fair and inclusive. Current failures could be attributed to the failure of the developed world to contribute fairly to the process, including through technology transfer, capacity-building and financial assistance.

54. Despite huge impediments caused by unlawful unilateral sanctions, his Government had made significant progress in empowering people and ensuring equality, based on its own principles and national priorities, as shown by the increasing number of female faculty members, college students, doctors and national decision makers. It had also reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by more than the intended 4 per cent compared with the "business as usual" scenario; achieved a literacy rate of 97 per cent and increased spending on public education; and implemented training for socially disadvantaged groups, rural communities, nomadic communities and prisoners, as well as education for migrants and refugees.

55. Those efforts were hampered by serious challenges, including natural disasters, land degradation, desertification and water scarcity, as well as regional threats and insecurity caused by foreign-sponsored terrorism, extremism and violence. The greatest threat to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by Iran and its neighbours was the unlawful extraterritorial economic sanctions imposed by the United States of America, in violation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). Those sanctions were a brutal form of economic terrorism.

56. A renewed commitment to multilateralism and global solidarity, entailing a renewed commitment by the developed world to help create an environment conducive to sustained economic growth and sustainable development, was urgently needed.

57. **Mr. Malmierca Díaz** (Cuba), Minister of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment, said that his Government had established a national group for the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda. Cuba was also one of the first developing countries to involve its audit institutions in the process of monitoring and evaluating

the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Satisfactory results had been obtained in the audit of Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Cuba was structured around the process of updating its social and economic model, as could be seen from the alignment of its national economic and social development plan with the Sustainable Development Goals. His Government had recently adopted a new Constitution, which contained elements providing legal support for the achievement of the Goals.

58. The major challenge to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Cuba was the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America, which was causing serious harm to the Cuban people. Despite the large-scale rejection of that embargo by the international community and broad sectors of United States society, it was still in effect and had been intensified, as evidenced by increased financial persecution, the recent activation of title III of the Helms-Burton Act and new sanctions imposed on Cuban entities.

59. Despite that situation, his Government continued to resolutely pursue the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals; among other achievements, it was the only country in Latin America and the Caribbean that had ended severe child malnutrition, taking it a step closer to achieving the targets of Goal 2 on ending hunger. His Government saw its commitment to the 2030 Agenda as a commitment to the sustainable development of all countries. It therefore actively cooperated with other States to provide aid in a spirit of solidarity to the most vulnerable. Only through multilateralism and concerted efforts to find solutions could progress be made towards the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

60. **Mr. Kumar** (India), Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, said that his country had made the 2030 Agenda a cornerstone of its development policies. The government think tank NITI Aayog was responsible for overseeing progress in that regard. The Government had implemented programmes aimed at empowering the most vulnerable segments of society and increasing inclusion across many dimensions. For example, it had lifted 270 million people out of multidimensional poverty between 2006 and 2016; increased financial inclusion by providing new bank accounts for 310 million people, mostly women; built a significant number of toilets to eliminate open defecation, having increased rural sanitation infrastructure from 38 per cent to 98 per cent of villages in four years; installed electricity and renewable energy capacity in all villages; given many women stoves to eliminate smoke-related

diseases; and launched an ambitious health insurance programme. India was committed to providing housing for all by 2022 and to creating mega-storage facilities for renewable energy. It had also created a ministry for water conservation and management and launched a multi-ministerial national nutrition mission.

61. The Government had published an index ranking achievements of the Goals by state, so that states could take control of their progress and integrate the Goals into their development plans. Its commitment to the Goals would help not only India but also the global community to implement the 2030 Agenda.

62. **Mr. Sika** (Tonga), Deputy Prime Minister, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Infrastructure and Tourism, said that his Government had integrated the Sustainable Development Goals and the Samoa Pathway into its strategic development framework, but more work needed to be done to meet the Goals.

63. With regard to Goal 4, Tonga had implemented compulsory education for children from 4 to 18 years of age and established free primary education. In relation to Goal 8, it had become a member of the International Labour Organization and worked to ratify its conventions, while, on Goal 10, it was addressing its limited economic opportunities through seasonal work programmes in partnership with Australia and New Zealand. With regard to Goal 13, it had launched a national action plan to manage disaster risks and the impact of climate change, along with a climate change trust fund to support the climate resilience needs of vulnerable sectors and communities. In relation to Goal 16, it had appointed its first female Supreme Court justice and its first female magistrate.

64. Tonga was committed to a whole-of-government approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda and sought the support of the collective United Nations system to strengthen bilateral and multilateral partnerships.

65. **Mr. Abela** (Malta), Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion, said that the 2019 theme "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality" was at the core of his country's development agenda. Malta was ranked twenty-eighth out of 162 countries in the 2019 Sustainable Development Goals Index, and its economy remained one of the strongest in Europe. Employment growth was among the highest in the European Union, while youth unemployment and income inequalities remained below average in that region. As human resources were vital to Malta, free access to health care, education and social services continued to be provided. Thanks to its strong education system, it was reducing early dropouts and producing

more graduates. Through the launch of various policies, it aimed to transform the education sector from a “one-size-fits-all” system to one that was inclusive and equitable for all learners.

66. Climate change remained one of the most pressing challenges faced by the international community. Given the scientific observations and recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, his Government had undertaken various measures to mitigate emissions and address vulnerabilities, which included the diversification of the energy mix and the diversification of water resources to better match supply and demand.

67. To achieve the Goals, safer communities must be built, based on shared rights and responsibilities and a strong judicial system underpinned by the rule of law. In that context, his Government had striven to improve the justice sector through better services and reforms, which had increased efficiency while safeguarding the rights of citizens. A new long-term sustainable development strategy, which would run up to 2050, was being developed. It focused on a number of challenges and gaps and set realistic goals to address them, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. His Government was also committed to ensuring a better quality of life and a brighter future for all, regardless of economic sector or social stratum.

68. **Mr. Doubragne** (Chad), Minister of Economy and Development Planning, said that his Government was determined to work towards a just world that accorded importance to people, planet, prosperity and peace by implementing the 2030 Agenda, with which its national development plan was aligned.

69. The context analysis performed in Chad had highlighted five major challenges which had been taken into account in the formulation of the national development plan. The Council’s 2019 theme and the Goals under review at the current session were reflective of the challenges that Chad faced.

70. Attentive to the principle of leaving no one behind, his Government had sought to involve all stakeholders, namely the national assembly, sectoral ministries, civil society organizations, the private sector, university and research institutions and development partners, in the achievement of the Goals. However, the collapse of oil prices from 2014 onwards, along with the insecurity brought by Boko Haram and other terrorist groups since 2015, had delayed the start of work towards the Goals until 2017. In 2018, the process had been accelerated by the creation of a coordination platform that had led to a participative and consensual exercise to contextualize and prioritize the Goals and to establish a road map.

71. The current rate of progress on the Goals permitted optimism on the questions of gender equality and female empowerment. The proportion of women in the national assembly had significantly increased and would continue to grow, thanks to a new legal provision requiring gender parity in appointed and elected posts.

72. **Ms. Strandhäll** (Sweden), Minister for Social Security, said that the aim of the 2030 Agenda was to improve the opportunities for future generations to live free from all forms of violence in a safe, sustainable and prosperous world.

73. Sweden was well placed to implement the 2030 Agenda, but much work remained to achieve the Goals. For example, the country must work harder to address existing inequalities, which would entail a dramatic reduction in income disparities and the provision of equal opportunities for all, including people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, minorities and newly arrived immigrants.

74. Sweden must also work harder to achieve equity in health care, provide equal opportunities for lifelong learning throughout the country and strengthen inclusive and sustainable economic growth that benefited all sections of society. There was growing awareness of the urgent need for action. In that regard, young people were giving a clear message through initiatives such as the school strikes for climate action.

75. To combat climate change, all of society needed to be transformed. Sweden aspired to be the first fossil-free welfare state in the world. Climate-related security risks threatened everyone, but the poorest, particularly women, were hardest hit by the devastating effects of climate change. The upcoming Climate Action Summit would be vital for putting the world on a 1.5°C pathway.

76. Sweden had a long history of a strong welfare system, which had been essential in building an open and inclusive society. Universal social protection was a human right and an indispensable tool in the fight against poverty, inequality and social exclusion. Furthermore, advances made towards gender equality could not be taken for granted, since, in many places around the world, the rights of women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health rights, were being weakened. Achieving gender equality would require courage and perseverance.

77. **Mr. Chiteme** (Zambia), Minister of National Development Planning, said that although African States were making efforts both collectively and individually to implement the 2030 Agenda, progress

was not fast enough. They needed to redouble their efforts to stay on track.

78. Zambia had mainstreamed most of the Sustainable Development Goal targets into its national development plan, which included a structure for monitoring and reporting on the Goals. His Government would soon publish a report on the Goals including a comprehensive assessment of indicators using local and international data. It had also analysed indicators at the subnational level, in order to be able to provide targeted interventions to enhance inclusiveness.

79. The national development plan had five key strategic development areas: diversification of the economy and creation of jobs; reduction of poverty and vulnerability, including through the implementation of a social cash transfer programme and through climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and mitigation programmes; the reduction of income, spatial and gender inequality, including through a rural development strategy; the enhancement of human development through increased access to education, health services, water and sanitation services; and the promotion of good governance.

80. **Mr. Magalhães** (Timor-Leste), Minister for Legal Reforms and Parliamentary Affairs, said that the Council's current theme was at the heart of his Government's State-building effort and was vital for maintaining peace and promoting sustainable economic growth.

81. As a new country, Timor-Leste had made remarkable progress, moving out of a period of civil unrest and conflict and becoming a democratic nation focused on State-building and sustainable development. His Government's significant progress on Goal 16 had enabled improvements in health, education, gender equality and infrastructure, and had been the catalyst for the country's growth as a nation. Because it was a small country, Timor-Leste was dedicated to a people-centred approach to development. Building human capital and investing in citizens was essential for an inclusive and prosperous society.

82. As part of its development plan, his Government was committed to utilizing its natural resources, promoting trade and cooperation with other countries and diversifying its economy, which would allow for the development of a prosperous and healthy society and a reduction in poverty. The plan would enable Timor-Leste to emerge as a dynamic economy with balanced purchasing power that could compete both regionally and globally. Since it was a small island developing State, international action to promote climate adaptation and climate-proof investments would be central to

protect its land and agriculture sector and to maintain food security. In 2021, Timor-Leste would be reviewed for graduation from least developed country status. His Government was aware of the challenges to achieving a sustainable graduation. It had already begun to develop its plans for that transition and was leveraging its domestic and international resources. However, at the current critical moment in its development, Timor-Leste needed to continue investing in strategic partnerships to help it grow as a potential middle- and upper middle-income country.

83. **Mr. Mannan** (Bangladesh), Minister of Planning, said that to realize the intended impact of the 2030 Agenda, particularly for those who were lagging behind in development terms, it was necessary to intensify implementation efforts.

84. Despite global economic struggles, Bangladesh had achieved significant economic growth in previous years, strengthening the possibility that it might become an upper-middle-income country by 2030. Economic prosperity was complementary to human development, so his Government was investing in quality education to foster a knowledge-based economy. Bangladesh had achieved gender parity at the primary and secondary levels of education.

85. As one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world and, with relatively little financial support from the international community, Bangladesh had been spending a significant amount of its scarce national resources to build climate adaptation and resilience measures and had created a national trust fund to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change.

86. His Government estimated that some \$928 billion would be necessary to achieve the Goals by 2030. Since it was unable to source that amount domestically, international cooperation in the form of financial investment, technical support and capacity-building would be fundamental to sustain economic and social development. Stronger global partnership was essential to implement the 2030 Agenda.

87. **Mr. Arreaza** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Minister of the People's Power for Foreign Affairs, said that inclusiveness and equality were the driving forces behind economic growth and, consequently, sustainable development. They were the foundation of a people-centred approach to development, which was necessary to implement the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, eradicate poverty.

88. His Government continued to work towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, involving and empowering communities, social movements and other

relevant actors, and taking a multidimensional approach to the fight against poverty and inequality. Its national development plan was based on the Sustainable Development Goals.

89. Current global realities posed major challenges for the United Nations system, especially because certain countries were seeking to undermine the basic principles of multilateralism and encourage global injustices such as colonialism and war, attacks on sovereignty over natural resources and the imposition of unjust and illegal unilateral coercive measures, such as those affecting Venezuela. Such measures were contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on Principles of Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States.

90. Even though unilateral coercive measures had been condemned by all Heads of State and Government when they had adopted the 2030 Agenda, such measures had been intensified against Venezuela in an attempt to harm its economic and political stability. All unilateral coercive measures must immediately be ended, not only those to which Venezuela was subject but also those imposed by the Government of the United States against Iran, Cuba and other countries.

91. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda required the international community to work in an inclusive and committed manner to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development that incorporated the social, economic and environmental dimensions and re-established a spirit of solidarity. If fully implemented, the 2030 Agenda would bring about a social revolution and a better, more peaceful world.

92. **Mr. Kai** (Sierra Leone), Minister of Planning and Economic Development, said that since its first voluntary national review, his country had launched a new medium-term national development plan that aligned with the Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063. His Government had identified Goal 4, on education, and Goal 16, on justice, as accelerator goals for the pursuit of the national development agenda. With regard to Goal 4, it had allocated 21 per cent of its national budget to the education sector, with a focus on financing a free education programme so that all students could have access to learning materials and services. Enrolment had increased at the primary and secondary levels, including for children with disabilities.

93. Concerning justice, Sierra Leone had engaged in many processes for the promotion of Goal 16, including hosting the 16+ Forum Annual Showcase and a technical consultation for Anglophone African countries, co-chairing the global Task Force on Justice and the

International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-building and chairing the g7+ group of fragile and conflict-affected States. His Government was dedicated to fostering peaceful, just and inclusive communities nationally and globally. It was committed to developing strategies for national access to justice and to ensuring that national indicators were aligned with global indicators.

94. His Government was establishing a peace and cohesion commission and had made progress in the fight against corruption and illicit financial flows, having recovered millions of dollars of previously unaccounted for and illegally obtained public funds. Additionally, it was transforming the judicial system by installing new digital infrastructure that would speed up court case processing and trials, and had established a national legal aid board that would improve access to justice, especially in rural areas.

95. Details on progress towards other critical Goals, in areas such as decent work, inequality reduction, climate action and partnership, could be found in the voluntary national review report.

96. **Mr. Mey** (Cameroon), Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, said that in a globally interdependent world, concerted global responses were necessary to solve the world's problems. The 2030 Agenda represented an opportunity to transform the planet, providing a new vision of a common global future that could unite Member States.

97. The 2030 Agenda was consistent with his country's national development plan. Cameroon had undertaken activities to contextualize and prioritize the Goals, and had also aligned its national strategy for the development of statistics with the Goals. It had achieved notable progress, particularly in the field of education. However, it still faced many challenges, including resource and partnership mobilization; access to science, technology and innovation; and capacity-building in relation to the national statistical information system. Discussions to strengthen national statistical systems across Africa deserved strong support.

98. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda would require urgent action and the challenges were immense. Cameroon was open to dialogue and consultation on finding sustainable solutions to development issues.

99. **Mr. Seka** (Côte d'Ivoire), Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, said that his Government had aligned its national development plan with the 2030 Agenda. To that end, multi-stakeholder groups and an inclusive road map had been established. Activities had

been undertaken to raise awareness and mobilize stakeholders so that each citizen became an actor responsible for improving the quality of the environment, the efficiency of the economy and the advancement of social progress. One of the main priorities of the development process was the Government's social programme.

100. Thanks to its strong annual economic growth, Côte d'Ivoire was one of the most dynamic economies on the African continent. The country did face challenges, though, namely in sharing the benefits of growth, strengthening social cohesion, obtaining disaggregated data, mobilizing financing, adapting planning to the requirements of the Goals and involving all of society in development. To meet those challenges, his Government planned to take action by reaping the benefits of a demographic dividend; accelerating the structural transformation of the Ivorian economy; strengthening the national system of planning and statistics; intensifying awareness-raising activities, consultations and capacity-building for all stakeholders; and executing its operational action plan and funding mechanism for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063, with the support of its technical and financial partners.

101. **Ms. Másmela** (Colombia), Minister of National Planning, said that the 2030 Agenda represented the wishes of the majority of countries to build a society that was peaceful, prosperous and conscious of the shared responsibility to protect the planet. For Colombia, the Goals were an opportunity to make significant transformations that would improve quality of life for all, entailing a reduction in inequality and an increase in opportunities.

102. Her Government had made progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda and defining the institutional framework required to establish it as a State policy and a long-term development commitment. It had established a second-generation national development plan consisting of a policy road map for the following four years, aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Goals in such a way that almost all of the plan's monitoring indicators had a direct association with at least one of the Goals.

103. Implementing the development plan meant that sustainable production and consumption would henceforth be the only form of acceptable economic growth and reducing inequalities between people and regions would be the priority for the Government and all stakeholders. With that in mind, her Government was committed to bringing the 2030 Agenda to all of its various regions. It aimed to mobilize the country around

the common goal of a prosperous and peaceful society that promoted equity through due process and entrepreneurship. The plan would lift millions of people out of extreme and general poverty.

104. In addition, given the importance of non-governmental actors to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, her Government had established a Sustainable Development Goals Corporate Tracker that measured the private sector's contributions to the achievement of the Goals.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.