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Summary record of the 34th meeting (Chamber B)

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 19 July 2019, at 10 a.m.

President: Ms. Juul (Vice-President) (Norway)

later: Ms. King (President) (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

Contents

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*)

- (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)

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In the absence of Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Ms. Juul (Norway), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*)
(E/2019/65, E/2019/66, E/2019/68, E/2019/70 and E/2019/78)

(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 the general debate on the theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”.

2. **Mr. Popolizio Bardales** (Peru), Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, to be held in September 2019, would provide an opportunity for Member States to renew their commitment to achieving the Goals, based on the premise of leaving no one behind and reaching the most vulnerable. It would also allow prioritization of the Goals that covered areas in which progress had been insufficient.

3. Significant progress had been made in Peru, including in the reduction of poverty, malnutrition and infant mortality, as well as in the expanded provision of basic education. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Peru had prioritized equitable, competitive and sustainable economic growth and the social development and well-being of the population. His Government’s national dialogue on empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality had led to the recent adoption of the *Visión del Perú al 2050* (Vision of Peru in 2050), which was aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and would allow the strategic plan for national development to be updated.

4. Progress towards the Goals was not being made quickly enough and many challenges remained, notably in terms of gender inequality, corruption and the effects of climate change. In order to overcome those challenges, Peru had taken measures that included the recent adoption of a national policy on gender equality, which aimed to guarantee protection from all types of violence. Peru was also working with Colombia to combat corruption, in line with Goal 16. Peru and Spain were also collaborating to address social and political challenges in the area of climate change through fair,

ecological transitions and green jobs, with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

5. Peru was working to ensure that the transition towards a sustainable and resilient economy could generate decent and environmentally responsible jobs and improve air quality and health-care systems. It aimed to implement climate actions that would contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and urged all countries to support those commitments.

6. **Mr. Thongphakdi** (Thailand), Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that, as the key beneficiaries and prime agents of sustainable development, people must be empowered and included in social, economic and political activities, in order to give them equal access and opportunities. To direct such efforts, Thailand had formulated a national strategy and an economic and social development plan. As a result, basic education was provided to all children, regardless of nationality and legal status; a basic income supplement was provided to those in poverty; a monthly allowance was granted to elderly persons to support their basic needs; 74,000 jobs had been created for persons with disabilities in 2018; and over 40,000 stateless persons had been granted Thai citizenship over the previous four years.

7. Ensuring decent work for all was another national priority. Thailand had introduced several policies to ensure inclusive, sustainable economic growth and full, productive employment. Promoting access to technology was key, particularly among rural communities. The importance of partnerships had been illustrated by the collaboration between the private sector, communities and the Government to revive forest areas and find sustainable solutions without resorting to deforestation. Partnerships for sustainability must also be forged with the international community. Thailand continued to contribute to narrowing the development gap among countries in the region through subregional and regional capacity-building programmes and the provision of official development assistance.

8. **Ms. Thompson** (Barbados), Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations, said that Barbados was fully aware of its national responsibility in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, it had worked towards the implementation of green and blue economies and the creation of a just, equitable and inclusive society in

which all citizens could live with dignity and young people could fulfil their potential.

9. The Sustainable Development Goals had been integrated into national development planning in Barbados, and the targets were mirrored in the country's development priorities. While such priorities were reflected in the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway), the specific vulnerabilities of small island developing States had been exacerbated by geopolitical, economic and environmental factors beyond their control in recent times. To ensure that those countries were not left behind, Member States must commit to moving from discussion to implementation of the Paris Agreement in order to support the Sustainable Development Goals and the Samoa Pathway.

10. The 2030 Agenda required all Member States to promote sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth; to reduce inequalities within and among countries; to construct an enabling architecture and financing mechanism for small island developing States; and to promote integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems, among other actions. The multilateral system must be strengthened and the existing roadblocks that created systemic poverty and economic inequality must be dismantled. The current high-level political forum should pave the way for a sustainable future for all.

11. **Mr. Skoknic Tapia** (Chile), Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, said that the high-level political forum had become a space for dialogue on exchanging experience, good practices, lessons learned and common challenges faced in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

12. The ambitious and transformative nature of the Agenda meant that it must be addressed on a collaborative basis, as sustainable development could not be achieved in isolation. Chile therefore considered the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals as a State policy that would be implemented through partnerships among civil society, the private sector, academia and State institutions. The second voluntary national review of Chile included initiatives by civil society and the private sector, along with details of public actions taken to achieve the Goals.

13. While the 2030 Agenda was broad in scope, many countries were working together to achieve sustainable development. The challenges faced in that process notably affected countries with high levels of vulnerability and middle-income countries, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Agenda presented an opportunity to bring development and

well-being to current generations, including the most vulnerable groups, and was also a long-term commitment to future generations.

14. **Mr. Carazo** (Costa Rica), Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations, said that Costa Rica remained committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda and had aligned its national development and public investment plans with the Sustainable Development Goals. Costa Rica was classified as an upper-middle-income country and considered the implementation of the Agenda as a national responsibility; nonetheless, the achievement of concrete outcomes was a challenge. Donor countries, international financial institutions and the United Nations system should reconsider the criteria for country classification, which took into account per capita income as the only indicator of development.

15. In order to evaluate the progress made, it was crucial to consider the multidimensional nature of development and poverty in order to provide a realistic insight into the needs and potential of every country. Despite its progress, Costa Rica still had structural gaps, which could be overcome through international cooperation and favourable conditions for access to sustainable development funding.

16. Despite improvements in macroeconomic indicators, inequality remained a structural phenomenon that affected thousands of people, and was the greatest challenge facing Latin America. Governments must promote redistributive policies, mainly in terms of employment and improved levels of education. Containing the rise in inequality was a national objective for Costa Rica, in order to strengthen and improve social, economic and political inclusion for all, particularly the empowerment of girls, young people and women to achieve greater equality and enjoyment of human rights.

17. Climate action, conservation and the preservation of ecosystems were priorities for Costa Rica. His Government had launched a long-term decarbonization plan, which established a national strategy and path for the development and transformation of the country into a modern, green and emission-free economy.

18. The ultimate goal of all such efforts was the achievement of a just, peaceful and inclusive society, which benefited from stable and transparent institutions and which guaranteed access to justice and social inclusion. To fulfil that goal, it was necessary to accelerate action towards the transformation of national development models in line with the 2030 Agenda.

19. **Mr. Jaime Calderón** (El Salvador), Deputy Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations, said that his country reaffirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals as drivers of development, peace and stability. There was a significant number of common challenges in what was a complex and evolving international environment. Nonetheless, El Salvador had made significant efforts at the national level towards implementing the Agenda.

20. Nonetheless, many of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals were unachievable at the current rates of progress. Inequality, climate change and instability were challenges that must be addressed decisively and as a matter of urgency. Honouring the commitments set out under the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development would also be crucial, redefining the approach to financing for sustainable development. The review of the progress and challenges associated with those commitments had shown that the mobilization of financial resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals remained insufficient. That shortfall could be addressed through the establishment of partnerships, while also taking into account the challenges faced by countries, including middle-income countries, in special situations.

21. For over half the global indicators of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the necessary statistical information was not collected regularly by the majority of countries. As a result, it was impossible to gain a full understanding of progress and challenges in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Governments and other interested parties must have access to disaggregated, high-quality, accessible and reliable data, which were fundamental to the adoption of decisions and to leaving no one behind.

22. **Mr. Hamza** (Nigeria), Director of the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria on the Sustainable Development Goals, said that his delegation had taken note of the concerns expressed in the reports of the Secretary-General, particularly in relation to the slow pace of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty must be eradicated, hunger must be ended and food security must be achieved in order to implement the 2030 Agenda.

23. His Government had developed a comprehensive accountability framework for enhanced coordination in mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals in his country. That framework had helped to identify the roles and expectations of each stakeholder and raise

awareness of the need to strengthen statistical capacity in relation to development indicators in Nigeria. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal targets, various groups in Nigeria had made significant progress in inclusive education and other critical sectors. National budgeting frameworks and development policies, plans and strategies had been aligned with the 2030 Agenda, with a particular focus on providing support to youth and to poor and vulnerable households.

24. The devastating impact of climate change continued to pose unimaginable threats to the existence of humanity. Nigeria was committed to addressing climate change and its associated disasters and was determined to promote the green economy and create decent jobs for young people. Lastly, illicit financial flows hindered countries in retaining the benefits of exploration and economic activities in their territory.

25. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic), Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, said that his country had worked tirelessly to complete its first national report on sustainable development, which had been published in April 2019. That report would be updated in time to be submitted as the voluntary national review of the Syrian Arab republic at the 2020 high-level political forum and would form the basis of subsequent national reports on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, while also launching the development process as part of the recovery from the terrorist war that had been waged against the Syrian Arab Republic.

26. While the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was primarily a national duty, addressing all the associated challenges was a universal responsibility. He asked those in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Agenda how Syria, which was experiencing exceptional circumstances and deserved special attention from the United Nations system, as stipulated in the Agenda itself, could overcome the fundamental obstacles to development that resulted from certain Governments' policies, which were based on unilateral coercive measures that amounted to an embargo and economic terrorism, on obstructing reconstruction in Syria, on supporting the financing of terrorism and its use as a political and military weapon against Syria, and on ignoring and protecting the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan. Four years after the adoption of the Agenda, certain international parties had pivoted towards selectivity with a view to ignoring its basic principles in a way that threatened the consensus reached when it had been adopted. If that exclusive approach was maintained, progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals would continue at a slow pace, while conflicts and

military spending would increase dangerously at the global level.

27. **Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein), Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the United Nations, said that his country had greatly benefited from strong partnerships and the rules-based international order and had consistently advocated for constructive and inclusive multilateralism based on international law. His Government was committed to incorporating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda into domestic legislation and had defined a set of Sustainable Development Goals where action was particularly urgent. It had presented its first voluntary national review the previous day, with participation from civil society and its youth delegate, which reflected the commitment of his Government to inclusive implementation efforts at the national level.

28. The rule of law was a common thread throughout all the Sustainable Development Goals. However, progress on the implementation of Goal 16 was insufficient. Two thirds of the world population lacked meaningful access to justice and at least 250 million people lived in extreme conditions of injustice. Liechtenstein would continue to place special emphasis on the implementation of Goal 16 in the coming months and years.

29. Corruption remained a particular challenge, both in terms of access to justice and, more broadly speaking, as an obstacle to the achievement of the Goals. It was one of the main factors that led to violence, insecurity and injustice. The successful eradication of corruption was therefore crucial for the achievement of peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Women and girls faced particular challenges in that regard, as they were subject to both legal discrimination and discriminatory social norms. The achievement of Goal 5 was of crucial importance to the comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In recent decades, de jure equality had largely been established between women and men in Liechtenstein. However, full gender equality in politics and in the workplace was yet to be achieved: women were five times less likely to hold management positions than men and significant differences remained in terms of wages. Women were also underrepresented in politics, particularly at the national level. To support the positive trends in the recent municipal elections, which had resulted in the highest level of participation of women to date, the Government aimed to optimize the conditions for reconciling work and family life.

30. Liechtenstein was committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals together with relevant actors. It had therefore joined forces with private sector

partners to help end modern slavery and human trafficking. It had also set up a financial sector commission together with Australia and the Netherlands, placing financial institutions at the centre of the global effort to end those crimes, which generated an estimated \$150 billion every year.

31. **Ms. Hastings-Williams** (Guyana), Minister of State, Ministry of the Presidency of Guyana, said that high-level meetings offered a timely opportunity for the international community to take stock of efforts to deliver on a range of global commitments and to define the necessary way forward to ensure that they were fulfilled.

32. Guyana had fully embraced the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, notably through its Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040, which had set her country on the path towards ensuring a more inclusive and prosperous society and facilitated its transition towards becoming a green State. The preparation of the first voluntary national review of the progress of Guyana towards the Goals had distilled some important lessons that would serve to enhance its efforts in that regard.

33. In order to overcome barriers to access based on geographic location, investment in the provision of basic and essential services, including potable water, renewable energy and quality health and education, was needed. Another priority was the enhancement of education to improve employment opportunities for women, youth and vulnerable communities.

34. Lastly, gross national income per capita should cease to be the only means of measuring development progress. Additional considerations such as vulnerability and resilience should be taken into account as a matter of urgency, in order to produce a measurement that was consistent with the multidimensional nature of poverty and inequality.

35. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia), Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, said that the 2019 high-level political forum reflected the commitment of Member States to finding solutions to global challenges. Saudi Arabia remained committed to the achievement of sustainable development; its national plans were aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and targets in their economic, social and environmental dimensions.

36. At the economic level, Saudi Arabia continued its efforts to create jobs through strategic initiatives and major projects. The country's stock exchange had been incorporated into global emerging-market indices and had joined the United Nations Sustainable Stock

Exchanges Initiative. According to the World Economic Forum, Saudi Arabia ranked seventh in the world in efficiency of government spending. The budget deficit had declined and non-oil revenues had increased as a result of a national strategy for the diversification of the economy. A national competitiveness centre had been established to remove the barriers facing the private sector. Saudi Arabia had continued to step up its efforts to combat climate change as it worked towards the full implementation of the Paris Agreement and to address the global and environmental challenges relating to the use of fossil fuels. It was also working to raise awareness among individuals and communities of issues relating to climate change.

37. His Government had also made advances with its quality of life programme, as a result of which the number of people over the age of 15 who played sport had increased by half in 2018. In order to ensure inclusiveness and social diversity, a residence system had been established for non-Saudis to make it easier for them to live with their families and carry out commercial activities. The Saudi Vision 2030 programme had focused on the development of human capital and on upgrading the quality of education. His country had also created multiple centres for the natural sciences in educational districts and established special towns for persons with disabilities. The statistical authority in Saudi Arabia had published in English and Arabic the first national report on indicators of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. His country looked forward to cooperating with the United Nations and strategic partners in order to achieve the Goals at the local, regional, national and international levels.

38. **Mr. Naeemi** (Afghanistan), Deputy Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, said that since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Government of Afghanistan had been working with the private sector, civil society and development partners to fulfil its commitments, in the midst of conflict and poverty. In order to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, Afghanistan had adopted the most relevant targets and indicators as national goals for development, set out in a national document. Those goals had been aligned with national development priorities and plans and mainstreamed into national planning and budgeting processes. Its national framework of indicators had also been reviewed to establish a workable and integrated monitoring and reporting mechanism.

39. However, Afghanistan continued to suffer from terrorism and violent extremism, which took their toll on the people, resources and infrastructure on a daily

basis, with the number of civilian casualties at its highest level ever, and widespread displacement. Not only were 1.1 million Afghans internally displaced, but the return of 1.7 million Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries had increased pressure on the national economy, institutions and the welfare of communities.

40. Despite those challenges, his Government was strongly committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda, as demonstrated through the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals into national programmes and the monitoring of progress towards them in order to make policy and technical preparations across the country. Afghanistan was working to ensure that no one was left behind and hoped that its international partners would help it advance towards the achievement of the Goals.

41. **Mr. Sharif** (Sudan), representative of the Sudan to the United Nations, said that poverty was the biggest challenge faced by developing countries in the achievement of sustainable development. Sudan attached special importance to the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, having set up a high-level national committee and the necessary structures to accelerate the achievement of their objectives. His Government had integrated the 2030 Agenda into its national policies and had submitted its first voluntary national review in 2018.

42. Despite the progress towards achieving those objectives, Sudan was among the least developed countries and was also a country coming out of conflict. The challenges faced remained significant, notably in relation to infrastructure, economic development and obtaining concessional credit. Factors such as inequality and climate change also prevented such countries from providing decent job opportunities.

43. Cooperation was required in order to end poverty and to address climate change. Despite all the challenges, Sudan would continue its efforts in those areas and called upon the international community to increase partnerships in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda and ensure that no one was left behind.

44. **Ms. Zografaska Krsteska** (North Macedonia), Deputy Permanent Representative of North Macedonia to the United Nations, said that the 2030 Agenda was a framework for change that placed people at the forefront. The theme of the 2019 high-level political forum was at the heart of activities carried out by her Government. Building one society for all was part of the reforms being implemented in the spheres of legislation, governance and administrative practice, comprising concrete actions to improve the lives of the vulnerable

through policies and measures to protect against discrimination, to strengthen the rule of law and gender equality and to improve the enjoyment of human rights for all.

45. The national law on the prevention of and protection against discrimination had recently been amended by her Government, making the prohibition of discrimination more extensive. That had contributed to the creation of an environment in which all individuals were able to exercise human rights and freedoms equally. In order to close the gender gap, North Macedonia had adopted a national action plan for gender equality that focused on establishing effective mechanisms at the national and local levels. It consisted of measures to integrate gender-responsive budgeting, policies and programme development.

46. North Macedonia recognized that more needed to be done to improve the living and working conditions of persons with disabilities to ensure that they were not left behind. People were empowered when they were able to provide for themselves and their families and when they had a voice in society that allowed their views to be heard and their concerns addressed. Employment and decent jobs were crucial factors that contributed to well-being.

47. To mark World Youth Skills Day, her Government had committed to improving the professional development of young people and decreasing youth unemployment. Accordingly, it had allocated more financial resources to information technology training, upgrading digital skills and supporting young entrepreneurs in opening new businesses.

48. North Macedonia considered the 2030 Agenda as a blueprint for sustainable reforms and was prioritizing Sustainable Development Goals 1, 4, 8, 13 and 16. It was focusing on measures and activities to decrease poverty; increase investment in education; improve professional skills and training in accordance with labour market requirements; strengthen the rule of law; enhance the democratic functioning of national institutions; and reduce air pollution and the negative effects of climate change.

49. **Ms. Klein** (Madagascar), representative of Madagascar to the United Nations, said that, in order to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, Madagascar gave a high priority to 64 targets and 85 indicators, which would be translated into action at the national, regional and local levels.

50. Her Government was finalizing its national plan for adaptation to climate change. As part of its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 14 per cent by

2030, Madagascar had set itself targets for reforestation, the dissemination of renewable energy and rural electrification. It was also taking steps to ensure the well-being of the population, in particular women and children.

51. Several initiatives had been undertaken to align the Sustainable Development Goals with the national context, notably through access to health services; the promotion of education for all; decent work; and the fight against forced child labour and trafficking in persons. Madagascar had also made commitments in relation to the demographic dividend, in the areas of health and family planning, education and skills development, employment and entrepreneurship, and good governance. A general census of the population and housing was also being finalized, in order to update national statistical data.

52. **Mr. Drobnjak** (Croatia), Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations, said that Croatia had presented its first voluntary national review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda earlier that year. That document had been prepared in parallel with its national development strategy, which would be adopted in 2020 and would contribute to sustainable development and demographic renewal of Croatia over the coming decade.

53. For Croatia, the dignity of every individual was fundamental, in line with the principle of leaving no one behind and the theme of the high-level political forum that year. With regard to the national implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, Croatia had identified education as the key to long-term social stability and economic progress. In his country, education was accessible to all on equal terms, in line with their abilities. The education system was also being enhanced for future generations, including through comprehensive curricular reform and the digitalization of the education system.

54. His Government had redefined its employment policy in 2018 in order to adapt to the needs of the labour market. It had encouraged new investment and the growth of export-oriented industrial production, which create job and increase the potential for innovation in the economy. Croatia supported a sustainable consumption and production policy while seeking to promote sustainability in all economic sectors.

55. Income inequality and inequality of access to social services and benefits were the main obstacles to economic development and growth in Croatia. Numerous reforms and measures were therefore being implemented with a regional approach. The regional

development policy of Croatia was characterized by collaboration between the central Government and local and regional governments, with a view to creating jobs, improving competitiveness, economic growth and quality of life, and supporting sustainable development.

56. **Mr. Civili** (Observer for the International Development Law Organization) said that the theme of the current high-level political forum, “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”, encapsulated the essential elements of his organization’s work in promoting access to justice. The focus on Sustainable Development Goal 16 at the current forum was also an exceptional opportunity to use all the knowledge and lessons learnt in country-level work to accelerate the achievement of that Goal, which would enable progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

57. The International Development Law Organization had held a conference on Goal 16 with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs earlier that year. The conference had featured an open, positive dialogue among Governments as well as representatives of the judiciary and civil society. The organization was planning to continue that dialogue on an annual basis. One of the conclusions from the conference was that investment in institution-building and capacity development was crucial to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

58. **Mr. Ogilvy** (Observer for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)) said that the global economic backdrop reflected the uncertain times in which the global population was currently living. Gross domestic product growth had slowed, trade growth had plunged and uncertainty was reducing levels of investment. Governments would continue to play a key role in creating an enabling environment for the Sustainable Development Goals, including through strong international cooperation and continued efforts to find effective and inclusive multilateral solutions to current and future challenges.

59. Inspired by the Sustainable Development Goals, OECD had redoubled its efforts to share its expertise, data and tools with the international community, in the areas of tax audit advice, education and quality of learning and climate change, for which it had continued to share clear and consistent evidence. While the Sustainable Development Goals were universal, no country had yet achieved them all. The recent decline in official development assistance to developing countries was particularly troubling. OECD would continue to encourage development cooperation, which was one of the many enablers of the Sustainable Development

Goals. It remained committed to working for and with the United Nations in that area and many others.

60. **Mr. González de Lena** (Observer for the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions) said that the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions comprised 70 economic and social councils around the world, councils that facilitated the participation of social actors and representatives of civil society in socioeconomic decision-making. With regard to the effects of technological changes on equality, digitization provided new opportunities for job creation but also entailed the risk of many people and countries being excluded from the digital economy. Policies were therefore needed to promote the positive effects of digitization, and the participation of civil society was essential in that regard. As a global association, the Association valued international cooperation and would continue to cooperate with the Economic and Social Council and share the experiences of economic and social councils.

61. **Ms. Cuevas Barron** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) said that the most pressing commitment under the 2030 Agenda was to put an end to exclusion, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals was a task to be shared by all. The importance of the role of parliamentarians and lawmakers in that regard was undeniable. IPU, which had 179 member parliaments representing 46,000 parliamentarians around the world, was endeavouring to transform the world in the 11 years remaining until 2030. Every piece of legislation needed to be revised to ensure that no one was left behind. It was also important to introduce quotas, as more women and young people were needed in parliaments. As the most important tool of public policy, budgets must reflect the Agenda and efforts to ensure adequate representation. IPU reiterated its commitment to work with the United Nations to make the world a more inclusive and fairer place.

62. **Ms. Khyne** (Myanmar), Deputy Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations, said that her Government was determined to ensure balanced and sustainable development in the economic, social and environmental spheres. To that end, it had developed, for the period 2018–2030, a sustainable development plan that was closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda. Through its national strategic education plan for the period 2016–2021, the Government was promoting high-quality education. Vocational training was also encouraged to ensure better livelihoods for young people. In Myanmar, the largest percentage of foreign direct investment had flowed to the non-extractive, labour-intensive manufacturing sector from 2017 to

2018. The Government was thereby promoting responsible investment, which was the main contributor to the creation of decent work in Myanmar and would raise income, reduce poverty and inequality and lead to more inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The national environment and climate change policies, which had been launched on World Environment Day in 2019, aimed to transform Myanmar into a climate-resilient society that was more sustainable and inclusive. Reforms to strengthen public institutions and promote the rule of law had been carried out with a view to creating a fair and just society.

63. The Government was engaged in a peace process to bring an end to the fraternal strife that had plagued the country for decades. In a multi-ethnic country such as Myanmar, forging unity from diversity was a multifaceted challenge, and the Government was firmly committed to bringing peace, development and national harmony in line with the aspirations of the people.

64. In order to implement the 2030 Agenda, the international community must redouble its efforts and mobilize the necessary resources. Myanmar remained committed to such implementation and stood ready to work with all partners to achieve sustainable development and ensure that no one was left behind by 2030.

65. **Ms. Warakaulle** (Observer for the European Organization for Nuclear Research) said that scientific and technological advances were essential to implementing the 2030 Agenda. Clear and cohesive policy frameworks and appropriate investment were needed to unlock the potential of science and technology to serve as drivers of development and to prevent them from generating counterproductive divides among and within societies. Initiatives to enable more young people to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics were needed, in particular in developing countries. The number of jobs related to those subjects was growing three times faster than other groups of jobs, yet only 25 per cent of young people chose to study them at university. Given the close connection between frontier technologies and basic sciences, investment in fundamental research must be sustained over time to enable much-needed breakthroughs in areas such as health, nutrition, energy and climate change. Open access to results, data and tools was another vital prerequisite for science to serve the development agenda. Fundamental research had an important role to play in all those areas. Basic science was a long-term social investment whose effects far outlasted those of any political science and advanced innovation, inclusion and equality.

66. **Mr. O'Connor** (Observer for the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) said that, as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services had made clear in recent assessments, the continued deterioration of species and ecosystems, which was occurring at rates not seen in millions of years, would have significant repercussions for nature and for people, in particular those who depended directly on nature for their livelihoods, and would undermine efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda.

67. The potential of nature-based solutions in development planning and tackling climate change had been seen locally. In New York, for example, wetlands had helped to avoid more than \$600 million in damage from Hurricane Sandy. Such solutions also had massive global potential. Researchers had found that, by storing carbon, global forest restoration could be the most effective climate change solution.

68. With the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in China, the World Conservation Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources to be held in Marseille, France, and the summit on biodiversity at the level of Heads of State and Government to be convened in New York, 2020 would be a watershed year for biodiversity.

69. **Mr. Alzabidy** (Observer for the League of Arab States) said that, since the inception of the 2030 Agenda, the League of Arab States had organized several ministerial conferences on issues related to sustainable development. The Arab priorities for the implementation of the Agenda had been developed at a ministerial conference held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2014, and adopted at the summit of the League of Arab States in 2015.

70. The Arab countries had taken note of the voluntary national reviews presented at the 2019 high-level political forum. However, several challenges, notably financing, warranted more attention from the Economic and Social Council in order to enable the Arab countries to fully implement the 2030 Agenda. It was also important to make progress towards peace. The Security Council was currently considering nine conflicts in the Arab region. The many refugees, migrants and displaced persons from those conflicts should be taken into consideration in efforts to achieve peace, in particular the establishment of the State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital and the pre-1967 borders. The League had emphasized coordination between members in the region to replace conflicts with development.

71. **Mr. Umarov** (Kazakhstan), Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, said that his country had presented its first voluntary national review on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in July 2019. Kazakhstan had begun achieving the Goals by thoroughly integrating them into national programmes, and had made visible progress in the areas of education, entrepreneurship development, the expansion of access to financial services and funds, poverty reduction and the modernization of the judicial system. In order to accelerate the implementation of the Goals, more ambitious measures must be taken on cross-cutting issues such as development financing, climate change, effective technologies and local action.

72. Many of the challenges facing developing countries in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals were transboundary and regional in nature. A new state-of-the-art United Nations building, currently hosting 16 United Nations agencies with multi-country, regional and subregional mandates, had been inaugurated by the President of Kazakhstan in Almaty on 1 May 2019, a step that would strengthen cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United Nations and improve coordination among all individual structures of the United Nations system. In support of the Secretary-General's initiative to reform the United Nations development system, Kazakhstan was also ready to establish a United Nations centre for the Goals in Almaty in order to pilot a regional and interregional approach in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Such an approach, with the close involvement of the United Nations, could turn the regions of the world, in particular Central Asia, into zones of peace, security, sustainable development and prosperity.

73. Since the establishment of the high-level political forum on sustainable development four years previously, the voluntary national reviews presented by Member States had provided a good basis for further development. Nevertheless, the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, to be held in September 2019, should be more than a set of reports on what each country had done. Kazakhstan was committed to cooperating closely with Member States at the Summit to send the world a clear signal of the international community's determination to achieve the Goals.

74. **Ms. Sigurdardottir** (Iceland), representative of Iceland to the United Nations, said that Iceland had presented its first voluntary national review earlier in July 2019. For 10 consecutive years, Iceland had been in the lead on most global indices relating to gender equality. In January 2018, her Government had adopted a groundbreaking equal pay law, making Iceland the

first country in which employers were required to obtain certification verifying that men and women were paid equally. The positive impact of parental leave with a dedicated share for fathers, which contributed to more equality both at home and in the labour market, had been seen in Iceland.

75. The Government had set a goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2040. Given that almost all electricity and heating in Iceland came from renewable energy, the Government would focus on cleaner transportation and better land use, including reclaiming woodlands, soil and drained wetlands.

76. In the Human Rights Council, to which Iceland had been elected in 2018, Iceland had emphasized gender equality and the rights of children and marginalized groups. Human rights were also central to its new international development cooperation policy. In June 2019, the Parliament had approved a bill on gender recognition that put Iceland among the most progressive States in terms of the status of the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.

77. **Mr. Grande** (International Telecommunication Union (ITU)) said that the world of technology was rapidly changing, and nations around the globe were joining the digital revolution to tackle some of the planet's biggest challenges. ITU was at the forefront of that revolution and applauded the efforts of countries to leverage technology to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

78. The voluntary national reviews conducted in 2019 had shown what Governments could do when they engaged not only in critical areas such as health care, education and energy, but also in relation to blockchain, artificial intelligence, financial technology, smart and sustainable cities, the Internet of things and big data. While such technologies held great potential for human progress, they also raised complex questions about trust and privacy and posed challenges with regard to the future of work, the protection of children online, digital sexual violence and e-waste. A priority of ITU was to ensure the trusted, safe and inclusive development of those technologies and equitable access to their benefits.

79. With more than half the world's population using the Internet, it was time to invest in key areas such as information and communications technology (ICT) and digital infrastructure, digital literacy, digital safety and cybersecurity. ITU commended countries that had used ICT to promote women's empowerment, young people, persons with disabilities, digital financial inclusion, small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship, and to connect rural communities.

80. **Mr. Pinheiro** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that many of the targets under review at the high-level political forum were connected to the mandate of ILO and its long-standing work to promote social justice and decent work for all. The review of Goal 8 in particular had highlighted that more effort was needed to implement the 2030 Agenda. In a report on Goal 8 presented during the forum, ILO had highlighted the fact that the global employment rate had finally recovered from the worldwide financial crisis, having regained its pre-crisis level of 5 per cent in 2018, but that informal employment remained unacceptably high, in particular among women and young people. The quantity of jobs should not come at the expense of their quality. ILO had also emphasized that policy coherence in relation to Goal 8 required universal social protection. There were still 152 million children in employment and 73 million children working in hazardous conditions, which was clearly unacceptable. ILO welcomed the initiative of Argentina to declare 2021 as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour and encouraged all countries to redouble efforts in that regard. To support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the International Labour Conference had adopted the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

81. **Ms. Hordosch** (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that the 2030 Agenda would be implemented only if gender inequalities, which persisted in every country, were systematically addressed. While some progress had been made on gender equality indicators, women and girls continued to undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and to face gender-based violence and discrimination.

82. Countries must accelerate efforts to repeal or revise discriminatory laws and practices and to ensure the full and equal participation and leadership of women in all processes. To protect the right of women to work and their rights at work, labour laws and policies must be implemented in tandem with social protection, care and macroeconomic policies. Gender-responsive approaches to address the global climate crisis were needed in all sectors, with a focus on sustainable consumption and production. The mobilization of domestic and international resources to achieve gender equality required progressive taxes, functioning tax systems and ex ante gender, human rights and environmental impact assessments of all financing mechanisms.

83. UN-Women would continue to support Governments and other stakeholders in the

implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. It called upon Member States to consider how to strengthen gender perspectives in the voluntary national reviews and the outcomes of the high-level political forum and to link the reviews to the 25th anniversary review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

84. **Mr. El Nour** (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that, by bringing together the entities of the United Nations system working on migration, the United Nations Network on Migration aimed to provide a coherent, system-wide response to the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. As landmark international cooperation frameworks that recognized migrants as integral members of society and contributors to sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Migration were inextricably linked. The 2030 Agenda had laid the groundwork for the Global Compact, identifying migration as a core development consideration – the first time that migration had been explicitly integrated into the global development agenda. By framing migration as an engine for sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda had helped to rebut the long-held view of migration as a failure of development. The Sustainable Development Goals could be achieved only if migrants and migration were included in national development strategies.

85. **Mr. Maseli** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that sustainable industrialization was central to meeting Goals 4, 8, 10, 13 and 17. Without industrial competitiveness and growth, increased trade and technological progress enabled by sustainable and inclusive industrial policies, economic growth and decent work could not be achieved. Increasing the capacities of local industries for value addition, economic diversification and export promotion, as well as supporting the creation of decent jobs in industry and industry-related services, would lead to structural transformation and economic growth. That would not be possible without supporting the development of entrepreneurial skills, providing technical and vocational training and helping to enhance the skills and knowledge of young people.

86. Central to the work of UNIDO was supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in reducing industrial emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, including through sustainable energy solutions and clean, resource-efficient technologies and practices. A guiding principle of UNIDO was to facilitate international cooperation, multi-stakeholder

partnerships and the alignment of public and private investment and industrial policies.

87. **Mr. Beynon** (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction) said that the Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved without reducing disaster and climate risk. Economic and development policies must take into account disaster risk; otherwise, they could create it. Given the increasingly systemic nature of risk, a hazard-by-hazard, siloed approach was no longer appropriate.

88. While progress had been made towards the achievement of some targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, more must be done to reduce the number of people affected by disasters and the economic losses resulting directly from disasters. It was therefore critical for countries to achieve the target of substantially increasing the number of countries with national and local risk reduction strategies by 2020.

89. Disaster risk reduction strategies laid the foundation for national development policies and plans that reduced rather than created such risk. Much greater efforts were needed across all sectors to ensure that disaster risk-informed policies and investments became the norm rather than the exception, as underlined at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction hosted by the Government of Switzerland in May 2019.

90. **Ms. Mucavi** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that, earlier that week, in *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019*, FAO had revealed that the number of hungry people in the world was estimated at 820 million and that 2 billion people were moderately or severely food insecure. Hunger was rising for the third successive year, threatening the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Overweight and obesity were also on the rise, and there were currently more overweight and obese people in the world than undernourished people. Small island developing States were among those facing high obesity rates. Ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030 required bold, large-scale measures. It was time to seize the opportunity to make food and agriculture systems sustainable and resilient and to ensure that everyone had year-round access to healthy and affordable diets that did not overburden the planet and its natural resources.

91. **Ms. Davtyan** (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)) said that empowering affected communities, confronting inequalities and including people living with HIV were crucial to the AIDS response. Efforts to reach Goals 10 and 16 must aim to eliminate stigma and discrimination against people

living with HIV and key populations. Punitive laws, such as HIV-related travel restrictions and the criminalization of same-sex sexual relations, must be removed. To reach Goal 8, full employment and decent work must be ensured for people living with HIV, at least 20 per cent of whom had reported being refused employment because of their HIV status. The power of education should be harnessed as an important tool for empowerment and HIV prevention. Children living with HIV must be included in mainstream education and young people must have access to comprehensive sexuality education. UNAIDS was concerned about the decline of nearly \$1 billion in AIDS financing in 2018 and called upon all stakeholders to contribute to the success of the replenishment conference of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to be held in October 2019.

92. **Ms. Razzouk** (Observer for the International Rescue Committee) said that, in the declaration of the high-level political forum, it must be acknowledged that refugees and internally displaced persons were among those being left the furthest behind. All Member States needed to explicitly include refugees in national development plans and voluntary national reviews and should pledge to do so at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in September 2019 and the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019. The United Nations and multilateral development banks needed to provide technical support and financing for those efforts. Such processes as the follow-up mechanism for the global compact on refugees needed to include the targets and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals related to refugees.

93. The International Rescue Committee was pleased that the Business Refugee Action Network would hold a meeting in the margins of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, following which a statement on the role of businesses in supporting refugees would be released.

94. **Ms. Dewi** (Rutgers University), speaking on behalf of the major group for women, said that women found themselves in very difficult times, with the rise of protectionist Governments, xenophobia, misogyny and discrimination. The effects of colonialism and unbridled neoliberalism, including massive poverty, unemployment and landlessness, combined with patriarchy and other systems of oppression, reinforced inequality, denied women agency and blocked progress towards sustainable development.

95. The success of the 2030 Agenda depended on political changes to ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals truly benefited those who were marginalized and systematically excluded. There must

be a profound shift away from the current focus on economic growth to an approach based on institutionalized leadership and development, justice and peace. Investment in extractive industries and the military must be reduced, gender equality must be achieved, feminist and social movements must be empowered and human rights must be upheld. Governments, corporations, the military-industrial complex and international financial institutions must be held accountable for upholding human rights and honouring commitments to leave no one behind.

96. **Ms. Utrera** (Observer for Fundación Luz María) said that Fundación Luz María had endeavoured to create a safe space for women affected by domestic violence through its work with the United Nations, the Office of the Mayor of New York and other organizations that aimed to end domestic violence, empower women and achieve gender equality. As a partner of the MY World survey of the Sustainable Development Goals Action Campaign, the foundation continued to promote the Sustainable Development Goals by hosting speaking engagements. A crucial change for implementing the 2030 Agenda would be to provide economic support to women in developing countries. One benefit of having financially independent women was the prevention of forced labour, modern slavery and trafficking in persons. Impact investments could also enable progressive minds to come together and have a global effect.

97. **Ms. Nachinga** (Commonwealth Youth Human Rights and Democracy Network), speaking on behalf of the major group for children and youth, said that, in order to tackle growing inequalities, it was necessary to restructure economic models and transform governance mechanisms. Excessive privatization and the consolidation of power had come at the expense of the people and the planet. Even in 2019, the socioeconomic background of young people was still a key determinant of their life outcomes. To address the matter, interns must be paid and equal pay must be ensured for equal work; universal social protection floors must be provided for all and income must be capped; public services must be provided equally in urban and rural areas; the minimum age for voting and running for office must be lowered; society must become more resilient to multidimensional risks; and major groups and other stakeholders must be included in the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Young people were agents of change who were essential to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and were holding Governments accountable.

98. **Ms. Sofjan** (Observer for the Huairou Commission) said that the Huairou Commission, a global grass-roots movement of women and their allies, promoted community resilience-building practices and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Community mapping and data collection tools had enabled grass-roots women's organizations to identify community development priorities. The Huairou Commission called for the engagement of women at the grass-roots level as leaders to monitor and evaluate development programmes; the decentralization of development finance so as to provide funds to grass-roots women's organizations in order to drive demand for resilient and sustainable community-centred development throughout the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and the recognition by Governments and local authorities of the public leadership roles assumed by organized grass-roots groups of women in community development.

99. **Ms. Madiz** (Plan International), speaking on behalf of the major group for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), said that Member States should justly and adequately finance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by strengthening domestic resource mobilization, ending tax evasion and avoidance and illicit financial flows, and guaranteeing international development assistance from industrialized countries at the scale required to address global crises. In order to achieve the Goals in accordance with the binding international human rights framework, Member States should commit themselves to conducting sustainable development and human rights impact assessments for all policy decisions. The obligations set out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and other Rio conventions should be fulfilled in a holistic manner by promoting the social and solidarity economy, protecting workers' rights and scaling up nature- and culture-based solutions. Member States should prioritize peace as a pathway to securing progress towards all Goals and protect those who were affected by conflicts but had little to do with instigating them. Lastly, the major group called upon Member States to strengthen their commitment to the transformational shifts required to achieve the 2030 Agenda, including by taking ambitious steps towards the targets before the end of 2020.

100. **Ms. Ka** (Observer for The Brooke) said that donkeys, mules and horses, which were recognized by the Committee on World Food Security as working animals, were essential to the livelihoods and resilience of millions of families in developing countries. About 600 million people around the world currently depended on working equine animals, including for agriculture,

transportation and domestic work. In Pakistan, for example, a household's entire income could be supported by the tractive power of working animals, while donkey owners in Kenya could earn up to 87 per cent of their annual income through their animals. The achievement of Goal 15 could be accelerated through the recognition of working animals in target 15.9. Expanding Goal 15 to include working animals would help to support rural communities in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

101. **Ms. Dhar** (AARP International), speaking on behalf of the stakeholder group on ageing, said that, despite promises made by world leaders to promote healthy and active ageing, older persons continued to face ageism and were excluded from development by discriminatory laws, policies and attitudes. Older persons were as important as any other age group and must be recognized as rights holders and active participants in their own development. Governments must therefore tackle age discrimination, including through support for a United Nations convention on the rights of older persons. The stakeholder group on ageing called upon Member States to adopt a life-course approach to public policies, aligning them with human rights principles; to ensure effective national institutions, social protection measures and basic services for all; and to eliminate discriminatory laws and practices, banning age restrictions in access to financial services and removing age caps from international surveys.

102. **Mr. Styers** (Observer for the Saudi Green Building Forum) said that the Saudi Green Building Forum, which had promoted green building and sustainable development since 2010, sought to raise awareness among officials and investors in the public and private sectors and among citizens of the importance of balancing humanitarian, environmental and economic needs and of recording and documenting buildings, neighbourhoods and cities.

103. Among the biggest challenges facing the world was the provision of adequate funding to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, partnering with organizations in consultative status with the Council, such as the Volunteer Groups Alliance, was essential. Volunteering in association with local civil society was necessary to widen responsibility and accountability across the Goals, and gap reporting by NGOs must be adopted. The reluctance of United Nations agencies in the Arab region to cooperate with NGOs that had been acknowledged by Governments in voluntary national reviews must be addressed. The Goals could not be achieved by 2030 without volunteers

who were engaged in urban development and culture while preserving nature.

104. **Mr. Lappalainen** (International Council for Adult Education), speaking on behalf of the stakeholder group for education and academia, said that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals relied on education and lifelong learning. Financing was the biggest challenge to the achievement of Goal 4. The lack of sufficient resource allocation to that Goal by Governments had given rise to increasing privatization in some countries, with for-profit actors taking advantage of gaps in public provision. Among the bottlenecks related to education policymaking was the narrowing of the broad agenda of Goal 4, to the detriment of youth and adult education. For education and lifelong learning to be accessible for all, they must be of good quality, inclusive and free and supported by the State through adequate policies and sufficient financing.

105. **Mr. Park** (Observer for the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice) said that the current priority of the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice was the reform of large family-owned conglomerates, known as "chaebol", which had dominated the economy of the Republic of Korea. Overdiversification and internal trading by chaebol had created an exclusive economic bloc in which chaebol companies wielded monopsony power, causing small and medium-sized enterprises to lose the incentive and capacity to innovate. Without a reform of such companies, the Republic of Korea could face an economic crisis like that of 1997. With the reform, the economy of the Republic of Korea would be fair and sustainable, and society would be inclusive. Unfortunately, the current Government had done nothing substantial to address the issue. The Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice would therefore continue to work with the citizens of the Republic of Korea to reform the chaebol.

106. **Mr. Styers** (Volunteer Groups Alliance), speaking on behalf of the stakeholder group for volunteers, said that the Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved without volunteers. Although volunteering took place in every community, it did not happen at uniform rates and was not uniformly effective. Volunteering thrived when it was supported politically and financially through legislation, policies and partnerships, and when it was measured, recognized and encouraged. Member States should formally recognize the contribution of volunteering in their voluntary national reviews and ensure that volunteer groups were fully supported in national plans and strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda. They should support the participation of non-governmental actors and hold

consultations with communities at all levels in the follow-up and review processes for the Sustainable Development Goals.

107. **Mr. Joshi** (Observer for Vaagdhara) said that, given the changing climate, farmers around the world, including in India, were facing tough times. There was an urgent need to revive lost indigenous knowledge and wisdom to empower local communities and help to generate lasting solutions to their problems. On the basis of its dialogue with indigenous communities, Vaagdhara recommended that, in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Governments should ensure that policies, schemes, programmes and projects for indigenous communities did not negatively affect tribal culture and traditions. In addition, adequate financial provisions should be made for traditional farming and indigenous food, every child should be given opportunities for growth and development, and traditional spaces for communication should be revived.

108. **Ms. Adams** (Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction), speaking on behalf of the Sendai stakeholders group, said that the barriers of poverty, conflict, inequality and access that resulted in people being left behind also set back the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, pushing the most vulnerable deeper into the harsh realities of inequality and instability and further away from resilience. When integrated into efforts towards the achievement of each Goal, the Sendai Framework could inform practical and coherent measures for risk-informed and sustainable development. Such measures should include the empowerment of those most at risk, who should lead risk assessments and be involved in decision-making and policy development, implementation and monitoring. In order to strengthen resilience from the perspective of those most at risk, a holistic, cross-sector and integrated approach to the Goals should be taken, solutions should be diversified and contextualized and include indigenous wisdom and nature-based approaches, and resource allocation should be decentralized and localized.

109. **Mr. Ali** (Observer for the Global Forum for Media Development) said that the reviews of Goal 16 had revealed that civic space was shrinking in many countries across the world. Hostility towards the media, openly encouraged by political leaders, and the efforts of authoritarian regimes to export their vision of journalism were threats to democracies and development. Analysis by the Global Forum for Media Development showed a high correlation between a lack of access to information and corruption, low rates of participation in elections and the risk of war. The two mutually reinforcing components of target 16.10 – namely, public access to

information and safety of journalists – must be taken into consideration in evaluating progress towards that target. All States should provide access to information-related laws and practices, and ensure the safety of journalists by immediately and unconditionally releasing all journalists imprisoned for their work, committing to the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, refraining from targeting and denigrating journalists and the media and increasing support for the sector through international development assistance and governance.

110. **Ms. Stabile** (OutRight Action International), speaking on behalf of the stakeholder group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, said that violence and discrimination against people on the basis of their multiple identities and circumstances often remained unseen by those in power. States had made a commitment to create conditions in which everyone could contribute to the development of their communities. It was in the interests of States to tap into everyone's human potential, expertise and capacities. Data were needed to reveal policy and programme gaps and develop relevant responses to crises. The theme of the 2019 high-level political forum implied that, to ensure inclusiveness and equality in education, economic growth, justice and strategies addressing climate change, everyone, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender-nonconforming and intersex persons, should be encouraged to participate. Structural barriers that excluded people from contributing to peaceful societies and sustainable development should be removed, and civil society should be provided with space to carry out development work freely and safely.

111. **Ms. Grossenbacher** (Observer for the International Real Estate Federation) said that the International Real Estate Federation was committed to supporting the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in assessing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. To that end, it had developed a tool to enable citizens to assess their city's progress towards the Goals as a complement to the City Prosperity Initiative of UN-Habitat. It was hoped that the tool would give citizens a voice and encourage their involvement in the achievement of the Goals. Another initiative was the collection of solutions from the private sector, which were published annually in a booklet, to encourage the construction and restoration of affordable housing. The solutions would be showcased at the tenth session of the World Urban Forum, to be held in Abu Dhabi.

112. **Ms. Cappuccio** (Observer for the Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro) said that the experience of Italy had shown that collective negotiation was a powerful tool for combating inequalities. Social negotiations between workers' trade unions and public institutions in Italy took place at the local and regional level and addressed social fragilities. Negotiations on social issues at the local level were held to obtain the consensus of citizens and encourage the involvement of the public and private sectors. Such negotiations were considered a success when they were the result of a positive consultation, their enforceability could be monitored and the unions' financial requirements were met. Such local experiences represented concrete steps towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as they highlighted the idea of local development in social, economic, cultural and environmental terms.

113. **Ms. Théodore** (Observer for Vues et voix) said that, in addition to producing and distributing audiobooks for persons with limited access to reading material and for the general public, Vues et voix ran a radio station that contributed to the inclusion and development of persons with disabilities. In order to promote access to culture and education, Vues et voix worked with global institutions to provide audiobooks to libraries in francophone countries in Africa and the Caribbean. Its goal was to ensure the accessibility of books, culture and information for everyone. Audiobooks were a format that was accessible to all.

114. The Government of Canada had recently adopted an act on accessibility with a view to eliminating barriers facing persons with disabilities and developing standards for communications and telecommunications, including books. In the private sector, those involved in the fields of information and books should be encouraged to ensure the accessibility of books and prevent discrimination in access to information and culture. Strategies should be developed in conjunction with economic actors to make audiobooks available for everyone.

115. **Ms. Russián** (Observer for the Fundación Latinoamericana por los Derechos Humanos y el Desarrollo Social) said that the case of Moses, an 8-year-old Venezuelan with juvenile myelomonocytic leukaemia who had been receiving treatment in Italy for the previous five years, was one of 41 cases that the Fundación Latinoamericana por los Derechos Humanos y el Desarrollo Social had documented and submitted to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, but it had not been included in the report of the High Commissioner on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Specialized treatment for such patients did

not exist in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; the Government had therefore established a medical programme to transfer them to hospitals around the world, thereby guaranteeing their right to life. However, patients were now at risk because of the embargo imposed by the United States of America against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The Government was no longer able to pay for medical treatment and medicine in countries such as Italy and Argentina, and banks were refusing to make transfers owing to the sanctions. The embargo was having a serious impact on the economic and social rights of the people and threatening the sustainable development of the country. The Fundación Latinoamericana por los Derechos Humanos y el Desarrollo Social urged all Member States to call for an end to the embargo.

116. **Mr. Karmakar** (Observer for the International Committee for Peace and Reconciliation) said that inequalities, including income, wealth, racial and social inequality and inequality in education and in opportunities for advancement, gave rise to social tensions and wars. In many countries, people were working for little or no pay and paralysed by threats, debt and violence, which amounted to modern slavery. Despite being illegal everywhere, slavery continued to thrive, with more than 43 million people were living in slavery as a consequence of forced labour, kidnapping and forced marriage. The existing economic system was another obstruction to social equality. In a recent study, Oxfam had revealed that the world's 26 richest people owned as much as the poorest 56 per cent, and the richest 1 per cent had amassed 82 per cent of the wealth created in 2018.

117. **Mr. Toh** (Observer for the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction) said that the role of education in raising critical understanding of the root causes of the conflicts and problems besetting humanity was indispensable. The vision and goals of the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction related to the ethical responsibility of educators in building a better world for all humanity and the planet. Members of the Council had been implementing curricula and pedagogical strategies that nurtured compassion, social justice, non-violence, human rights, intercultural understanding, reconciliation and sustainability. Such values were most relevant to the attainment of Goal 4, notably target 4.7. All Governments, United Nations agencies, NGOs and civil society organizations should fully implement Goal 4, especially target 4.7, in line with the theme of the high-level political forum, "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality".

118. **Ms. Cappuccio** (Observer for the First Modern Agro. Tools – Common Initiative Group) said that, although the international community had repeatedly called for inclusive dialogue between the Government of Cameroon and the anglophone separatist leaders, such calls seemed to have fallen on deaf ears. A genocide was taking place in the anglophone regions of the country, with tens of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees in neighbouring Nigeria. The United Nations should empower the anglophone linguistic minority in Cameroon by sending a fact-finding mission to establish that a genocide was in fact being carried out, facilitate inclusive dialogue and put an end to the genocide. The President of Cameroon had shown no desire to end the genocide and address the root causes of the conflict. The international community must put an end to the violence, hold those responsible for the atrocities accountable and restore the rule of law with respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

119. **Ms. Yanovsky** (Observer for the Fundación Argentina a las Naciones Camino a la Verdad) said that the social, ethical and moral responsibility of States to protect citizens needed to be redefined. The United Nations must take into consideration the culture of each continent's population. While the Sustainable Development Goals were a shared objective, efforts to achieve them varied according to the customs and practices of each continent. Integrated multidisciplinary, multicultural, multisectoral, multi-ethnic and interreligious continental committees needed to be established to carry out interactive but not interdependent work to promote international cooperation and improve the distribution of resources.

120. The United Nations must work towards a holistic, forward-looking, supportive and comprehensive vision and prioritize complementarity, the essence of which was humility and solidarity, over competitiveness, the essence of which was selfishness and greed, in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and empower people, guaranteeing inclusion and equality. States must assume their social, ethical and moral responsibility to protect citizens, establishing not only common global priorities but also continental and national ones to achieve the Goals.

121. **Mr. Bühler** (Observer for Bäuerliche Erzeugergemeinschaft Schwäbisch Hall) said that the prevailing agricultural systems in the industrialized Western economies were not sustainable owing to the intensive use of pesticides, artificial fertilizer and genetically modified organisms. In particular, wastage of natural resources through water pollution, soil erosion and loss of biodiversity had harmful effects on

the climate and human health. Agricultural policies should therefore shift towards organic farming methods, which had been proven to be more resource-efficient and were the only way to ensure sustainable and viable land use and agricultural production in the future. The adoption of organic methods, together with the green economy, would not only entail the sustainable and environmentally friendly production of agricultural goods and food, but would also save natural resources and enable the world to be fed through peaceful means.

122. **Ms. Abdelmonsef** (Observer for the Maat Foundation for Peace, Development and Human Rights), speaking also on behalf of Partners for Transparency, said that Africa was facing various barriers to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. With regard to target 16.1 of Goal 16, external actors supported rebellions as well as Governments on that continent, leading to conflict. Concerning target 16.2, ILO had reported that 36 million people in Africa were subjected to different kinds of slavery. With respect to target 16.4, Qatar had provided weapons to Somalia despite the embargo. Regarding target 16.5, corruption and nepotism threatened African countries. A united African position against countries that supported terrorism should be adopted. Democratic systems that included all parties, leaving no one behind, needed to be established.

123. **Ms. Essif** (Observer for the United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation) said that money-laundering, corruption, the abuse of power by investment companies and the financing of terrorism were global problems threatening not only the security of States but also the stability, transparency and effectiveness of their financial systems. The increasingly devastating effects of the abuse of financial systems on economic and social inclusion were a grave threat to the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations must take steps to counter the devastating economic and social consequences for States, in particular developing countries and those with fragile financial systems. It was essential to encourage and support local actors in combating abuse of financial systems and to develop sustainable development policies at the national, regional and international levels to promote the creation of an enabling environment for young entrepreneurs and their integration into value chains and high-value-added markets.

124. **Mr. Shem-Tov** (Observer for Pirate Parties International Headquarters) said that global collaboration was needed to reform government institutions and electoral systems so that ordinary people were engaged in governance. Corrupt institutions must be drastically reformed or abolished, and

transparency and accountability must be enforced to expose corruption and misconduct. The Internet was the perfect tool for those purposes, and online environments must be treated as a global public space. Inequalities would persist unless everyone was empowered to participate equally in a democratic system that granted decision-making powers at all levels. Members of a community must be able to make decisions on issues that directly affected them. Member States and NGOs should join Pirate Parties International Headquarters in developing online electoral systems.

125. **Ms. Jun** (Observer for Stiftelsen Stockholm International Water Institute) said that, while water shortages, floods and dirty water could be associated with insecurity, water could also be a pathway to transformation. A focus on water could help achieve every Sustainable Development Goal and honour other global commitments, such as the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework and the New Urban Agenda. With regard to Goal 4, enabling access to safe water close to home would liberate girls and women from their water-related chores, allowing them to educate and empower themselves. In relation to Goal 8, equitable access to water for smallholder farmers could mean the difference between farming as a means of survival and farming as a reliable and dignified source of livelihood. With respect to Goal 13, water was a necessity in almost all climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. Regarding Goal 16, shared water resources could serve as an entry point for dialogue, mutual gains and confidence-building beyond the water sector, thereby supporting peacebuilding.

126. *Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) took the Chair.*

127. **Ms. Nandan** and **Ms. Falco** (Observer for Books to Africa International) said that Books to Africa International, a charity founded by four African students and registered in the United Kingdom, was committed to reducing environmental waste in the United Kingdom and improving the quality of education in Africa. Its work focused on the interrelated nature of Goals 4, 10, 13 and 15. Providing students and teachers in Africa with access to high-quality educational materials such as books empowered the whole community. Books to Africa International had initiated a scholarship programme in Nigeria and was seeking support to extend the initiative. In its reports, Books to Africa International highlighted the ways in which access to books ensured inclusiveness and equality by empowering students and teachers to improve their academic performance.

128. **Ms. Diambi** (Observer for the African Views Organization) said that, as the leader and ruler of the Bakwa-Luntu people of Kasai in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, she was speaking on behalf of the kings and queens of Africa. Although Africa had inherited a structure of governance from the colonial era, it still had traditional kings and queens who represented the core values and cultural heritage of the continent and who should be supported by institutions such as the United Nations. Those rulers must be empowered to help the development of Africa and assist African Governments in working towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular at the local level.

129. **Mr. Shah** (Observer for the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) said that a more equitable land tenure system would not only support efforts to address climate change, rapid urbanization and resource scarcity but also help to reverse structural inequalities within and among countries. In many countries, land rights and land governance systems were weak, resulting in undocumented and overlapping tenure rights and claims. The Sustainable Development Goals offered an opportunity to raise the status of land tenure and property rights. In view of the current lack of technical tools and solutions, however, standards were urgently needed in the land industry. In June 2016, the international land measurement standard had been established with the objective of establishing a due diligence framework for surveyors working in land acquisition and transfer that embraced the global governance principles in the Goals. Establishing efficient land markets through the adoption of industry standards would help to stimulate the development of infrastructure and services and, by facilitating the use of land as investment security for loans, would foster economic growth.

130. **Mr. Tejasvi** (Observer for the World Forum for Ethics in Business) said that a business idea was successful when it served a genuine social need. When business ambition was balanced with compassion and the desire to give back to society, prosperity could follow. Business leaders must reinforce the message that prosperity was possible without resorting to unethical means. The basis for development was inner peace, peace in the community and peace among nations. Politicians, the media, businesses and faith-based organizations should work together in the broader social interest for a prosperous and sustainable future. Education in human values, faith in non-violence and the creation of a more humane society with ethical businesses were integral to establishing a just and equitable society.

131. **Ms. Sensor** (Observer for Sigma Theta Tau, International Honorary Society of Nursing) said that the mission of Sigma, which represented more than 135,000 nursing leaders in 92 countries, was to advance world health and celebrate nursing excellence. The Sustainable Development Goals reflected the social and environmental determinants of health and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life, such as economic policies and systems, development agendas, social policies and political systems. Nurses worked with communities and individuals to improve those determinants of health and used their knowledge and expertise to empower others to promote health and to ensure inclusiveness and equality. When nurses were empowered to act to the full extent of their abilities in leadership, health promotion and disease prevention, they contributed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals with no one left behind. Sigma sought to help achieve the Goals through the involvement of its members and, as the collective voice of nurse leaders across the globe, educated its members about the importance of that work.

132. **Mr. Ndorleh** (Observer for Word of Life International) said that nothing could be achieved without empowerment, inclusiveness and equality. Goal 4 had been the vision of the technical and management team of Word of Life International when it was being trained by the United Nations and partner organizations that had supported Liberians since 1990. To achieve its vision, Word of Life International had needed to be empowered, included and treated equitably by all, including the Council, which had granted it special consultative status in July 2018. Word of Life International operated in Liberia with very limited resources, which were mobilized from its activities in the United States. In March 2019, the Government of Liberia had given Word of Life International accreditation in recognition of its role in the community.

133. **Mr. Lacerda** (Observer for the Fundação Antonio Meneghetti) said that ontopsychology provided the methodology to develop a sustainable human being. In Recanto Maestro, Brazil, the Fundação Antonio Meneghetti and its associated educational institution, Antonio Meneghetti Faculdade, in partnership with private and public institutions, and with absolutely no government funding, were experiencing the results of the practical application of the discoveries of Antonio Meneghetti through social projects, undergraduate and graduate courses, start-up companies and businesses. The Sustainable Development Goals were being achieved in Recanto Maestro, because they were based on the idea that humans were responsible for their own success and capable of peace and creativity.

134. **Ms. Miranda** (Observer for the Fundação Antonio Meneghetti) said that Fundação Antonio Meneghetti was involved in 23 educational projects to help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Based on ontopsychological pedagogy, the projects provided young professionals with leadership opportunities. She was working with a youth orchestra that taught classical music to 500 children in public schools and recommended that young people everywhere participate in such projects.

135. **Ms. Haroutunian** (Observer for the Abaad Resource Center for Gender Equality) said that it was difficult to talk about empowerment, inclusiveness and equality when more than 1.5 million Syrians and a large community of Palestinians were living as refugees in Lebanon. The conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic had had a significant impact on the social and economic growth of Lebanon, worsening existing development constraints. Civil society organizations and the Government had been forced to prioritize the humanitarian response, reversing progress towards long-term development goals. To eliminate inequalities, it was necessary to overcome systemic barriers and address gender, human rights and humanitarian needs, as well as to strengthen resilience to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, Member States and United Nations institutions should take invest in social protection through multi-year funding; adopt a rights-based approach to the return of refugees; continue to foster the resilience of communities while promoting social cohesion and stability; address institutional fragmentation; mainstream gender-sensitive and inclusive interventions; and ensure integrity across the donor community and zero tolerance for abuse and discrimination.

136. **Mr. Dumitrescu** (Observer for BJD Reinsurance Consulting) said that BJD Reinsurance Consulting focused on closing the protection gaps in relation to natural disasters and was dedicated to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Although the insurance industry was carrying out important work to achieve the Goals, it needed to do more. The insurance industry had taken a leadership role in understanding risk and providing more protection for families, communities, businesses and Governments. The Insurance Development Forum, a public-private partnership led by the industry and supported by international organizations, aimed to extend the use of insurance and its related risk management capabilities to build greater resilience and protection. BJD Reinsurance Consulting supported the call of the Forum for collaboration and action to be accelerated in order to

close protection gaps. Innovative partnerships were also needed to that end. In that regard, the InsuResilience initiative of the Group of Seven and the Global Insurance Forum of the Group of 20 were engaging stakeholders. However, the lack of coherent governance in that global task persisted.

137. **Ms. Murphy** (Observer for Women Deliver) said that Deliver for Good was a global partner-driven campaign that applied a gender lens to the Sustainable Development Goals. Girls and women played a critical role in achieving all the related targets and must therefore be at the heart of all the Goals, not only Goal 5. In relation to Goal 4, for example, educating girls and women unlocked the potential to improve health, nutrition, social justice and economic prosperity for current and future generations. With regard to Goal 8, women were resilient and resourceful economic agents despite persistent gender-based barriers. Girls and women were also integral to achieving Goal 16. Research showed that the participation of women in resolution processes increased the chances of peace agreements lasting for 15 years by 35 per cent. It would be possible to implement the 2030 Agenda only by working across sectors, issues and generations to accelerate progress for girls and women.

138. **Ms. Pappolla** (Observer for the Asociación Civil Hecho por Nosotros) said that the artisan sector was estimated to be a \$40 billion industry, but artisans received a minimal fraction of the benefits. The fashion industry, a \$2.5 trillion industry that employed 1 in 6 people in the world, had been linked to human rights and dire environmental issues. The fashion industry had a cross-cutting impact on the Sustainable Development Goals and a massive potential for good. The Asociación Civil Hecho por Nosotros provided technical assistance in order to connect small businesses to global markets. In order to stimulate systemic change, collective action was needed to harness technology for transparency across supply chains, empower the growth of disruptive sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises and raise awareness among consumers.

139. **Mr. Kadioglu** (Observer for Belediye ve Özel İdare Çalışanları Birliği Sendikası) said that his country, Turkey, was hosting more than 4 million refugees, and his people shared their problems. Countries with the power to provide solutions should take into consideration countries in difficult situations. Turkey was addressing its refugee situation alone because developed countries had begun by determining the most urgent issues in the countries in the worst situations. He did not wish to place the burden of finding a solution on the shoulders of the permanent members of the Security Council, although those countries took more than half

the world's income. Joint humanitarian action needed to be taken urgently to find solutions to the situations in the Syrian Arab Republic; Yemen; the State of Palestine; Rakhine, Myanmar; East Turkestan, China; and other areas.

140. **Mr. Munir** (Observer for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization) said that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was committed to deepening regional cooperation to improve the investment and business climate. It was seeking to develop effective cooperation among the research and analytical centres of its member States in order to analyse the factors affecting economic cooperation among those States. The organization was also committed to developing practical cooperation to ensure compliance with legislation and strengthen the independence of the judiciary. In agriculture, the organization was implementing a programme for cooperation in food security. The ongoing cooperation in health care included the signature of an action plan for cooperation among member States for the period 2019–2021, with a view to continuing joint work in areas such as capacity-building to combat the spread of infectious and non-communicable diseases. The secretariat of the organization had launched a series of exhibitions to explore the rich and diverse culture, nature, art and customs of member States.

141. **Mr. Parmegiani** (Observer for the Legião da Boa Vontade/Legion of Good Will) said that strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships and the civil society leadership were key to implementing the 2030 Agenda. If inclusiveness, equality and empowerment were to be ensured in that time frame, it was imperative to prioritize work at the grass-roots level. Through its work, the Legion of Good Will saw that, when provided with access to social protection systems, high-quality education and opportunities for positive engagement in the community, people had the capacity for self-improvement. Education with spirituality based on fraternal love was what transformed individuals and built sustainable communities. Charity must therefore be strengthened in all mechanisms of public administration. Development that was neither fair nor compassionate could not be sustainable; therefore, together with technological advances and effective public policies, ethical and spiritual development must be promoted.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.