



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 August 2021

Original: English

2021 session

23 July 2020–22 July 2021

Management segment

Summary record of the 9th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 9 June 2021, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Kelapile (Vice-President) (Botswana)

Contents

Agenda item 10: The role of the United Nations system in the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Agenda item 11: Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020

(a) Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions (*continued*)

(g) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(i) Calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields

(d) Long-term programme of support for Haiti

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(e) Environment

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions (*continued*)

(e) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (*continued*)

(f) Human rights

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent as soon as possible to the Chief of the Documents Management Section (dms@un.org).

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).

21-07608 (E)



Please recycle 



- (h) Comprehensive implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Agenda item 20: United Nations research and training institutes

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

- (k) United Nations Forum on Forests (*continued*)

In the absence of Mr. Akram (Pakistan), Mr. Kelapile (Botswana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 10: The role of the United Nations system in the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Agenda item 11: Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits
([A/76/73-E/2021/51](#) and [E/2021/53](#))

1. **Mr. Tiensin** (Chair of the Committee on World Food Security), speaking via video link to introduce the report on the main decisions, outcomes and policy recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security, transmitted in a note by the Secretary-General ([A/76/73-E/2021/51](#)), said that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continued to profoundly affect food systems and threaten the progressive realization of the right to food. In the past year and several months, food supply chains had been significantly disrupted, as food workers had been unable to plant, harvest, transport and sell their produce owing to the lockdowns imposed as a result of the pandemic and to the ensuing global economic slowdown. Those crises had resulted in lower incomes and an increase in the prices of some foods; while that situation had benefited some food producers, it had put healthy, nutritious foods out of financial reach for many, with serious consequences for food security and nutrition. As indicated in the 2020 report on the state of food security and nutrition in the world, some 2 billion people had faced moderate or severe food insecurity before the outbreak of the pandemic, and an additional 83 to 132 million people would experience food insecurity as a direct or indirect result. Furthermore, malnutrition, including overweight and obesity, increased vulnerability to COVID-19.

2. The pandemic had affected food security and nutrition in complex ways, in addition to being linked with the loss of natural habitats, environmental degradation and decreased biodiversity. The High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition had prepared a comprehensive analysis and in-depth review of the main trends affecting food systems as a result of the pandemic, and had drafted an issues paper containing a deeper analysis of its implications for food security and sustainable development, which was available on the Committee website.

3. Over the past 18 months, the Committee had continued to serve as the only United Nations multi-

stakeholder platform for inclusive engagement on the fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goal 2, bringing together a broad range of governmental and non-governmental actors. Through that democratic process, the Committee had developed a number of policy products designed to directly address the root causes of hunger and malnutrition. For example, in February 2021, the Committee had endorsed its Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition. The result of over five years of inclusive, multi-stakeholder consultations and negotiations, the Guidelines were a concrete tool designed to provide policymakers and other stakeholders with information on practical policies and interventions to address malnutrition in all its forms through a holistic “food systems” approach. The Guidelines recognized the importance of implementing interventions within and across food systems to ensure that they led to the adoption of healthy diets and to positive outcomes across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. All Governments and Committee stakeholders should promote and implement the Guidelines at all levels, in conjunction with other relevant initiatives and platforms. In that regard, UN-Nutrition and its member organizations were to be commended for their early dedication to supporting the implementation of the Guidelines, in conjunction with the commitments assumed under the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025).

4. In 2020, the High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition had issued a report entitled *Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030*, in which it had presented a new conceptual framework connecting food and agricultural systems to health, environmental, economic, social and other systems, and had proposed the addition of two new dimensions (agency and sustainability) to the four existing dimensions of food security (availability, access, utilization and stability). The Panel had also called for shifts towards policy approaches that recognized the need for the transformation of food systems; conceptualized food security and nutrition as a system interconnected with other systems and sectors; focused on hunger and all forms of malnutrition; and recognized that food security and nutrition challenges were context-specific and required diverse, local solutions.

5. In February 2021, the Committee had endorsed the terms of reference for the preparation of its voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment; those guidelines would be presented for

the Committee's endorsement in October 2022. Advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls was critical to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and to ensuring the economic, social and environmental sustainability of food systems. In June 2021, the Committee had convened a special session during which it had endorsed policy recommendations on agroecological and other innovative approaches, which offered a road map for rebuilding better after the pandemic and for achieving more sustainable and inclusive food systems and more sustainable nutrition patterns.

6. The United Nations Food Systems Summit would provide an opportunity for the international community to fundamentally transform food systems in order to address hunger, sustainability and malnutrition, while upholding human rights, alleviating poverty and supporting inclusive and sustainable development for all. The Committee's expert reports and policy instruments, including its Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, its Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, its Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, its Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises and its Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, could play an important role in guiding the work of the Summit and the implementation of any follow-up measures required.

7. **Ms. Yamamoto** (Chair of UN-Nutrition and Assistant Director-General for Universal Health Coverage and Healthier Populations of the World Health Organization), speaking via video link to introduce the report on UN-Nutrition, transmitted in a note by the Secretary-General (E/2021/53), said that the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in unprecedented health, food security, economic and nutritional challenges, in addition to accentuating inequities. The number of people affected by acute food and nutrition insecurity had increased following the imposition of government restrictions designed to curb contagion; the disruption of supply lines for nutritious foods had led to diminished access for vulnerable groups; job and income losses in the informal sector in particular had undermined food and nutrition security; and school feeding had been interrupted for millions of children as a result of school closures. In his policy brief on the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition, the Secretary-General had warned that each percentage-point drop in global gross domestic product (GDP) could result in an additional 0.7 million stunted children, a situation that

could have severe repercussions, given that stunting had an irreversible impact on children's cognitive and physical growth, and that stunted children were more likely to become overweight or obese later in life.

8. The establishment of UN-Nutrition in 2020, following the merger between the United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition and Scaling Up Nutrition, had been timely, given the need for collective action in response to COVID-19. As a mechanism for enhanced United Nations system-wide coordination for nutrition, UN-Nutrition bridged nutrition efforts at the country and global levels and promoted efficiencies. In 2020 and 2021, it had assisted Member States in mitigating the short- and long-term effects of the pandemic by developing and continually updating a comprehensive list of online resources designed to serve as a "one-stop shop" for United Nations technical guidance on nutrition-related initiatives and adaptations in response to COVID-19. UN-Nutrition had also helped to harmonize nutrition-related messaging in response to the pandemic at the global and country levels and, in partnership with the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, had developed an advocacy brief aimed at maintaining awareness of nutrition during the pandemic. UN-Nutrition had also supported the integration of nutrition into national COVID-19 response plans.

9. Despite the pandemic, UN-Nutrition had maintained its workstreams under the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025), advancing efforts to rebuild better by enhancing the links between nutrition and water, climate change, environmental protection, the rural-urban nexus, gender, and development financing. It had also continued to assist the Committee on World Food Security in the preparation of its Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, and had contributed to the development of a global action plan on child wasting published in March 2020, which was aimed at accelerating progress towards the related target under the Comprehensive Implementation Plan on Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition endorsed by the World Health Assembly. UN-Nutrition had also delivered strong messages relating to the importance of sustainable healthy diets and improved nutrition for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 at global, regional and national events. In addition, UN-Nutrition had continued to raise awareness among United Nations leadership, including resident coordinators, and had encouraged the implementation of joint programmes in most Scaling Up Nutrition countries in 2020.

10. In 2021, UN-Nutrition had continued to promote sustainable healthy diets. Its secretariat had recently published discussion papers relating to the role of aquatic foods and of livestock-derived foods, prepared in collaboration with member agencies and partners. UN-Nutrition was also discussing measures to protect human and planetary health, and would encourage countries to develop national food-based dietary guidelines including sustainability considerations. It would also continue to promote government food purchases for public policies, programmes and institutions that encouraged sustainable healthy diets. In addition, it would facilitate closer cooperation among United Nations agencies in supporting Member States' efforts to combat all forms of malnutrition.

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (A/76/71-E/2021/13)

11. **Ms. 'Utoikamanu** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) (A/76/71-E/2021/13), said that the report contained comprehensive information on the progress made in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action during its full ten-year period, covering all eight priority areas for action and the overarching goal of enhancing graduation from the least developed country category. The report was also a key input for the preparations for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held from 23 to 27 January 2022 in Doha. She thanked the Government of Qatar for generously offering to host the Conference.

12. During the period covered by the Istanbul Programme of Action, a record number of least developed countries had reached the graduation thresholds. At its eighth meeting, the Economic and Social Council had endorsed the recommendation of the Committee for Policy Development that the countries recommended for graduation at the 2021 triennial review be granted a five-year preparatory period. However, despite that important progress, the number of countries having graduated had fallen short of the target of half the least developed countries set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action.

13. Overall, significant advances had been made in areas such as access to information and communications technology, sustainable energy, health, education,

gender and governance. Nevertheless, progress had been uneven among and within countries, and critical gaps remained where the least developed countries as a group had fallen short of meeting the targets set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic had had a disproportionate impact on least developed countries, causing not only a public health crisis but also severe socioeconomic disruptions, including declining GDP, foreign direct investment and remittances, as well as worsening debt situations, thereby exacerbating inequalities, poverty, food insecurity and the effects of climate change.

14. Although the exact extent of the pandemic's impact was not yet known, progress towards the indicators under the Istanbul Programme of Action seemed likely to be reversed; renewed efforts to promote their achievement were therefore necessary. The report therefore included a number of recommendations for consideration at the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. For example, it was necessary to establish the conditions required for least developed countries to recover from the pandemic, including equitable and timely access to COVID-19 vaccines. In addition, the least developed countries themselves must take steps to enhance fiscal space, and the international community must reverse the decline in the provision of official development assistance to such countries. Stakeholders must also find a long-term solution to the debt situation by building on the progress achieved under the Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative.

15. The unfinished business of the Istanbul Programme of Action must also be completed. High priority should be given to eradicating extreme poverty and addressing food insecurity and hunger in the least developed countries, and the successful use of international support measures in the area of trade by several such countries should be replicated. In addition, diversifying exports, building productive capacity and moving up global value chains remained key objectives. The emphasis of the Istanbul Programme of Action on a strong governance system also remained critical. Enhanced support was needed to build climate adaptation capacity, facilitate access to climate funds and ensure that policies were disaster risk-informed. It was also essential to fully harness the potential of new technologies and prevent the deepening of the digital divide with regard to broadband, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and blockchain. Further efforts must be made to promote the equality, inclusion and socioeconomic empowerment of all women and girls, and young people must be given special assistance to

acquire the skills they needed to realize their aspirations. Lastly, the next programme of action must address the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies in which equal access to justice was ensured and human rights were fully respected.

16. With a record number of least developed countries meeting the graduation thresholds, support for graduating countries should be increased. That would require additional flexibility from development partners with regard to smooth transitions, as well as increased United Nations support. Initial progress in those areas had been made at the first session of the intergovernmental preparatory committee for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which had been held in New York from 24 to 28 May 2021. As preparations for the Conference progressed, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States would continue to support the preparatory committee's meetings. A joint event of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council under the theme "Diversifying the financing toolbox to enhance investment in least developed countries" would be held on 18 June 2021. The Asia-Pacific regional review meeting in preparation for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be hosted by the Government of Bangladesh, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, was still to be scheduled.

17. The second and final session of the intergovernmental preparatory committee for the Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries would be held in New York from 26 to 30 July 2021: as it had done prior to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Group of Least Developed Countries would produce a preliminary draft of the outcome document to serve as the basis for discussions. At the Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, stakeholders must adopt an ambitious outcome that would help to recover lost ground in the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, advance the objectives of the decade of action for the Goals and ensure that no least developed country was left behind.

18. **Mr. Ligoya** (Observer for Malawi), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that, before the pandemic, least developed countries had made modest progress towards a number of key indicators under the Istanbul Programme of Action. For

example, some gains had been made in eradicating poverty, and the percentage of the population with Internet access had increased from about 5 per cent in 2011 to 19 per cent in 2019. Access to electricity had also increased significantly, from 35 per cent in 2011 to 52 per cent in 2018, although disparities between urban and rural areas remained. In addition, the share of manufactured products in exports from the least developed countries had increased from 22 to 40 per cent between 2011 and 2019. Rates of enrolment in primary education had increased, and progress had been made under a number of indicators related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

19. Overall, however, the least developed countries were struggling to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The pace of the structural transformation of their economies remained slow. For example, between 2011 and 2019, the contribution of manufacturing to GDP had remained relatively constant, at about 10 per cent. The participation of the least developed countries in world trade remained marginal, despite the widespread availability of duty-free and quota-free market access, and the majority of their economies remained largely dependent on commodities for production and trade. Moreover, the prevalence of severe food insecurity had increased from 17.6 per cent in 2011 to 20 per cent in 2019.

20. As a result of the pandemic, the least developed countries were facing disproportionate and unprecedented health and economic crises, which were reversing their hard-earned development gains. All but eight least developed countries had recorded negative growth rates in 2020, and COVID-19 continued to spread rapidly in those countries as new variants and strains emerged worldwide. Given the gravity of the situation, the Group had issued a statement on COVID-19 in which it had called for a global stimulus package for least developed countries, including official development assistance, debt relief, aid for trade and access to technology. The Group had also called for COVID-19 vaccines to be made a global public good that was universally accessible.

21. The debt situation had worsened and funding had decreased significantly, with reductions of 7 per cent in remittances, 10.7 per cent in merchandise exports and 40 per cent in foreign direct investment in 2020. The Group was also deeply concerned that the number of undernourished people in the least developed countries, which had been on the rise prior to the pandemic, had increased further following its outbreak. The pandemic had also highlighted the digital divide, as many least developed countries had struggled to maintain business operations during lockdowns and to ensure the

conditions necessary for remote learning. They also lagged behind the rest of the world in terms of global economic recovery: most such countries would likely take several years to return to their pre-pandemic levels of per capita GDP, while one third were expected to take five or more years to do so.

22. Nevertheless, the Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries would provide an opportunity to develop a road map for pandemic recovery and the resumption of progress under the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals. Efforts must be made to address poverty through innovation and robust action. Stakeholders must also help to reduce the acute funding gaps faced by least developed countries by promoting debt sustainability, remittances, foreign direct investment and official development aid, given that half of least developed countries were in debt distress or at risk thereof. Stakeholders must also fulfil commitments and use innovative tools to provide least developed countries with access to funding on affordable terms. Science, technology and innovation must be leveraged to achieve transformative change in the least developed countries, and the digital divide must be bridged through technology transfers in order to increase the capacity of such countries to respond to systemic challenges and compete at a global level. The energy of the youthful populations of least developed countries should also be harnessed for the implementation of the next programme of action, and risks related to climate change, price shocks and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic must be addressed as a matter of priority. Lastly, cooperation must be strengthened in order to identify lasting solutions to the challenges faced by least developed countries.

23. **Mr. Black** (Canada) said that Canada was proud to serve as Co-Chair of the intergovernmental preparatory committee for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, together with Bangladesh. He was nevertheless concerned that the development progress of many such countries was at risk of being reversed in the coming months and years. Priority must be given to pandemic recovery, including the equitable distribution and manufacturing of vaccines and the provision of economic support to least developed countries. Efforts must also be made to complete the unfinished business of the Istanbul Programme of Action and to address challenges, such as climate change and the digital divide, which had emerged since the adoption of the Programme of Action. The United Nations must also consider how best to support least developed countries, including by reviewing the appropriateness of incentives and indices

related to graduation, so as to ensure that graduation was not seen as a form of punishment.

24. **Ms. Stern** (Australia) said that there was still much unfinished business to be addressed at the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, particularly in the light of the impact of COVID-19, which remained uncertain. In the Indo-Pacific region, efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 had significantly undermined economic and human development. As the most senior Pacific woman serving in the United Nations system, the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Land-locked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Ms. 'Utoikamanu, had represented the region with distinction. Australia looked forward to continuing to work with her Office in supporting least developed countries on their path towards graduation, while noting that such countries had ownership of their own development and that graduation should not be viewed as punishment.

(a) Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/76/79-E/2021/68 and E/FFDF/2021/3)

25. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the recommendation contained in chapter I of the report of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up (E/FFDF/2021/3). He took it that the Council wished to transmit the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the forum on financing for development follow-up to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Council.

26. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions (continued)

(g) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (E/2021/43-E/C.19/2021/10)

27. **Ms. Nuorgam** (Chair of the of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues), speaking via video link to introduce the report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its twentieth session (E/2021/43-E/C.19/2021/10), said that, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the twentieth session of the Permanent Forum had been its first session in two years, and most meetings had been held in a virtual format. Although indigenous peoples from all regions of the world had participated in the session, their participation had been limited in comparison with previous sessions, a fact that

clearly demonstrated the reality of the digital divide for such peoples. As efforts were made to identify lessons learned from the pandemic, emphasis should be placed on the need for greater access to information and communications technology for all, in particular indigenous peoples, who often lived in remote and isolated areas. In-person dialogue was indispensable for effective communication and consensus-building, and for the fulfilment by the Permanent Forum of its mandates.

28. The session, which had been held under the theme “Peace, justice and strong institutions: the role of indigenous peoples in implementing Sustainable Development Goal 16”, had nevertheless had a successful outcome. During the discussions, the Permanent Forum had emphasized the need to ensure that indigenous peoples had effective access to justice through mechanisms that did not violate or threaten their rights. States must also recognize the importance of indigenous peoples’ own justice systems in protecting their rights to maintain their autonomy, culture and traditions. In addition, the Permanent Forum would facilitate a process between indigenous peoples and Member States with the aim of rethinking and supporting international efforts to promote peace, security and peacebuilding, ensuring the effective participation of indigenous peoples.

29. Stakeholders should take steps at the country level to ensure the full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including by promoting legal reform and policymaking in line with the Declaration and by ensuring that such measures were followed up with effective administrative action and were supported by adequate resources. Such steps would be beneficial not only for indigenous peoples but for society as a whole. The Permanent Forum would continue to facilitate regional dialogues between Member States and indigenous peoples, in particular by organizing informal discussions to support the development of guiding principles for the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples to autonomy and self-governance. The active participation of Member States in those discussions was encouraged. The theme of the twenty-first session would be “Indigenous peoples, business, autonomy and the human rights principles of due diligence, including free, prior and informed consent”, a timely subject given the increasingly important role played by the private sector in matters affecting indigenous peoples.

Draft decision I: International expert group meeting on the theme “Indigenous peoples, business, autonomy and the human rights principles of due diligence, including free, prior and informed consent”

Draft decision II: Venue and dates of the twenty-first session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Draft decision III: Report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its twentieth session and provisional agenda of its twenty-first session

30. **The President** drew attention to the draft decisions contained in chapter I, section A, of the report.

31. *Draft decisions I, II and III were adopted.*

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions (continued)

- (i) **Calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields (E/2021/50 and E/2021/59; E/2021/L.21)**

Draft resolution E/2021/L.21: Provisional calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields for 2022 and 2023

- (d) **Long-term programme of support for Haiti (E/2021/66; E/2021/L.16)**

Draft decision E/2021/L.16: Appointment of an additional member of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti

34. **The President** said that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

35. *Draft decision E/2021/L.16 was adopted.*

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (continued)

- (e) **Environment (A/76/25)**

36. **Mr. Ahmad** (Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, New York Office, United Nations Environment Programme), speaking via video link to introduce the report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme on its fifth session (A/76/25), said that, in the light of the exceptional circumstances associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, it had been decided that the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly would be held in two parts, comprising an online meeting, to be held from 22 to 23 February 2021, and a resumed in-person meeting, to be held in Nairobi from 28 February to 2 March 2022. A special session of the Environment Assembly, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations

Environment Programme, would also be held from 3 to 4 March 2022, in conjunction with the resumed in-person meeting.

37. The online meeting of the fifth session, held under the theme “Strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”, had garnered the participation of 151 Member States, including 110 at the ministerial level, and of a significant number of United Nations bodies, entities and specialized agencies, and the secretariats of various environmental conventions, international organizations, civil society, major groups, academia and the business and scientific communities. The online format had also enabled thousands of private citizens to follow the meeting, which had received between 5,000 and 8,000 individual views.

38. During the high-level segment, ministers of the environment and other high-level representatives had participated in an online leadership dialogue under the theme “Contribution of the environmental dimension of sustainable development to building a resilient and inclusive post-pandemic world”. During the dialogue, participants had emphasized the close links between nature, human health and the climate and pollution crises, and had stressed the need for a green recovery from the pandemic that would transform the relationship between humans and nature, heal the planet and contribute to the achievement of a low-carbon, resilient and inclusive post-pandemic world, while addressing the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. The strategic importance of 2021 for consolidating transformative change, increasing ambition and galvanizing action had also been emphasized.

39. At the online meeting, the United Nations Environment Assembly had adopted a medium-term strategy for 2022–2025, based on the recognition of the existence of three planetary crises: climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. During the period covered by the strategy, the United Nations Environment Programme would pursue three interlinked and mutually reinforcing objectives: climate stability, defined by the achievement of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions and of resilience in the face of climate change; harmonious coexistence between nature and humankind; and a pollution-free planet, in which pollution was prevented and controlled, and good environmental quality and improved health and well-being were ensured for all.

40. At the online meeting of its fifth session, the Environment Assembly had also endorsed the outcome message of the online meeting, entitled “Looking ahead to the resumed UN Environment Assembly in 2022: Message from the online UNEA-5, Nairobi, 22–

23 February 2021”, in which it had identified several priority areas relevant to the agendas of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly. The report of the United Nations Environment Assembly (A/76/25) also provided an excellent opportunity to further integrate the outcomes of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly into the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. At the time of its consideration of that report at its seventy-sixth session, the General Assembly might wish to consider taking a number of actions related to the report, as set out in its paragraph 25.

41. **The President** said that he took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme on its fifth session (A/76/25).

42. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions (*continued*)

(e) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (*continued*)

43. **Ms. Menikdiwela** (Director, New York Office, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)), speaking via video link to report on the coordination aspects of the work of UNHCR, said that, even as the COVID-19 pandemic had posed protection and socioeconomic challenges, in particular for fragile and conflict-affected countries, which hosted over two thirds of the world’s refugees, conflict and displacement had continued unabated. In 2020, over 11.2 million people had been newly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence and climate change.

44. Although the COVID-19 response had tested the new decentralized structure of UNHCR, the Office had harnessed that structure to accelerate reform and engage in partnerships, in the spirit of the global compact on refugees. The regionalization processes had enabled the Office to participate actively in the roll-out of United Nations development system reform at the regional level, including in the new regional collaborative platforms. UNHCR had also doubled its contribution to the resident coordinator system to \$2.5 million. At the policy level, UNHCR continued to gradually incorporate relevant aspects of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and had issued specific guidance to its country offices in order to ensure country-level contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. In addition, in accordance with the United

Nations Framework for the Immediate Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19, and through the Development Coordination Office, UNHCR had issued guidance to resident coordinators on how to include forcibly displaced and stateless people in socioeconomic impact assessments.

45. UNHCR had strengthened its partnerships and diversified them to include more local organizations and first responders, as well as development and peacebuilding actors and international financial institutions. The Office had also provided 28 per cent of its global programme expenditure, or \$802 million, to local and national responders, exceeding its Grand Bargain target of 25 per cent. In addition, UNHCR had issued an Innovation Award honouring refugee-led organizations that had developed innovative responses to the pandemic, and had launched an innovative fund to assist local actors and civil society organizations in combating sexual exploitation and abuse.

46. UNHCR had also collaborated with a number of sister agencies. For example, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund, UNHCR had developed the Blueprint for Joint Action for Refugee Children, targeting 10 million refugees and their host communities, and, in collaboration with the World Food Programme, had established a joint targeting hub to assist country offices in providing longer-term support in the area of food security. In addition, the United Nations Children's Fund, UNHCR, the World Food Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had pledged to use a common cash transfer system. New partnership agreements had also been signed with the World Health Organization, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

47. UNHCR had continued to co-lead the results group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on accountability to affected populations, and had proposed the establishment of a tracker in order to measure the performance of humanitarian country teams in the areas of accountability and inclusion. The Office had also led the drafting of Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidance aimed at ensuring the participation of local actors in the Committee's mechanisms; over 100 local actors had commented on the draft guidance, and the final version was expected to be issued by the end of June 2021. With regard to internally displaced persons, UNHCR continued to lead the protection, shelter, camp coordination and camp management clusters, and had contributed to the work of the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement.

48. UNHCR had continued to cooperate with the World Bank Group on policy and programme development; data, evidence and analytics; knowledge management; and human resource development. By mid-2020, \$1.85 billion had been allocated to 14 eligible countries in Africa and Asia under the International Development Association (IDA18) regional sub-window for refugees and host communities. As part of the IDA19 policy package for fragility, conflict and violence, \$2.2 billion had been allocated under the window for host communities and refugees; of that amount, the World Bank Group had pledged to provide eligible countries with up to \$1 billion in grants for activities related to the COVID-19 response during its 2021 financial year. To help United Nations country teams and Governments to identify the needs of refugees and displaced persons, the World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement had funded the collection of primary data on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 in Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Niger, Rwanda and Uganda. UNHCR had also revitalized its engagement with regional development banks. For example, in 2020, the Board of Directors of the African Development Bank had approved the allocation of \$20.5 million for a project aimed at addressing the impact of COVID-19 in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger by bolstering the primary health response and the resilience of vulnerable communities.

49. In 2020, UNHCR had led seven refugee response plans covering the inter-agency response in 37 countries hosting refugees from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of); the plan for the Syrian Arab Republic had been co-led with the United Nations Development Programme and plan for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had been co-led with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). UNHCR and IOM had also co-led the joint response plan for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis in Bangladesh. Under those plans, support had been mobilized from some 600 partners, which had collectively pledged to provide \$11 billion to assist and protect nearly 13 million refugees and to support 13 million people from host communities.

50. With regard to climate change, UNHCR was working with partners such as the Platform on Disaster Displacement, the International Organization for Migration, the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and States to address challenges relating to law and policy, operations and the

environmental sustainability of UNHCR itself. The variety of protracted refugee situations, together with deepening poverty and the lack of enduring peace settlements, had highlighted the need for a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach. UNHCR had therefore begun new projects in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan and northern Central America, with support from the Peacebuilding Fund.

51. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, UNHCR had continued to work with the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee to provide support to refugee athletes and para-athletes, including the over 60 refugee athletes and para-athletes who were currently receiving scholarships from sports organizations for training with a view to competing in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. In conjunction with the Education Above All Foundation and the Generation Amazing programme of the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy of Qatar, UNHCR had also developed the Sport for Protection programme and toolkit, aimed at ensuring positive interactions among refugee youth and adolescents, and between such youth and adolescents and their host communities, and at providing refugee girls with equal access to sports and empowering them to assume leadership roles.

(f) Human rights (E/2021/22-E/C.12/2020/3)

52. **Mr. Zerbini Ribeiro Leão** (Chair of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), speaking via video link to introduce the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its sixty-seventh and sixty-eighth sessions (E/2021/22-E/C.12/2020/3), said that, notwithstanding the unprecedented challenges faced by the world in 2020, the Committee had made every effort to fulfil its mandate. As at 16 October 2020, 171 States had been parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and 25 States had been parties to the Optional Protocol thereto. Those numbers had been stagnating, and Council members that had not yet ratified the Covenant or the Optional Protocol were encouraged to do so.

53. The pandemic had highlighted the critical need to respect economic, social and cultural rights, in addition to having a major impact on the reporting process under the Covenant. At its sixty-seventh session, before the onset of the pandemic, the Committee had only been able to examine five State party reports and had had to postpone the consideration of those scheduled for review at the sixty-eighth session. In 2021, the Committee, like most other human rights treaty bodies,

had begun reviewing State party reports online. Although States, the Committee and the various departments that supported the Committee's work had responded positively to that change, the online format had considerable limitations, particularly given the wide range of time zones represented by Committee members.

54. The level of reporting remained a challenge, as a significant number of States parties had not yet engaged with the Committee or had reports that were overdue for submission. In 2020, the Committee had agreed, subject to available resources, to introduce an eight-year predictable cycle for the submission of reports and to generalize the use of the simplified reporting procedure that had been launched on a pilot basis in 2015; it had also discussed the specific steps required to do so. However, engaging with all 171 States parties would require more resources than engaging only with those that reported regularly. The Committee would therefore continue to participate in the discussions relating to the 2020 review of the treaty body system, and hoped that the resources needed for the introduction of the new reporting cycle would be made available. Although significant progress had been made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, treaty bodies continued to face severe resource shortages. He encouraged the Council to do everything in its power to ensure that the Committee had the necessary resources under the regular budget to fulfil its mandate and engage predictably with all States parties.

55. As global discussions focused increasingly on the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and on the need for a sustainable recovery from the pandemic, the Committee's work was more important than ever. The rights enshrined in the Covenant were essential to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the Chairs of the treaty bodies had submitted a statement for consideration at the 2021 high-level political forum for sustainable development. In addition, since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Committee had adopted three statements; the most recent, adopted in March 2021, had focused on vaccination, international cooperation and intellectual property. The statements also contained guidance relating to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals, which should guide States' efforts to address the impact of COVID-19 and implement the Covenant and the 2030 Agenda.

56. The Committee had continued to review individual communications submitted pursuant to the Optional Protocol. In one case, it had determined that a violation

of the right to housing under the Covenant had occurred. It had also declared inadmissible 3 communications and had discontinued the examination of 10 communications. The Committee had also adopted a report on measures taken in response to decisions concerning individual communications. During the reporting period, the Committee had received 79 individual communications, fewer than in previous reporting periods, owing to the pandemic. Of that total, 26 communications had been registered, as they had complied with admissibility requirements. The Committee had therefore registered a total of 200 individual communications since the entry into force of the Optional Protocol. In addition, the working group on communications had held more than 10 meetings outside the Committee's sessions in order to address issues related to its work under the Optional Protocol.

57. The Committee had also adopted a general comment on science and economic, social and cultural rights, and was working on two additional general comments: one on land and economic, social and cultural rights, a draft of which was publicly available for stakeholder contributions, and one on sustainable development and economic, social and cultural rights, which would be prepared in 2022.

58. The Committee had endeavoured to collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders, including States, national human rights institutions and civil society. While the challenges faced in 2020 had provided some opportunities for wider-reaching initiatives, they had also reduced the amount of time available to carry out such initiatives. He hoped that optimal operational methods could be found under the current challenging circumstances. For his part, he would continue to collaborate periodically with the Chairs of the other United Nations treaty bodies in order to improve efficiency, effectiveness and the harmonization of working methods, and to review good practices, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [68/268](#).

59. **The President** said that he took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its sixty-seventh and sixty-eighth sessions ([E/2021/22-E/C.12/2020/3](#)).

60. *It was so decided.*

(h) Comprehensive implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

61. **The President** said that the General Assembly, in its resolution [62/220](#), had decided that the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council would constitute a three-tiered

intergovernmental process for the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. He informed the Council that no advance documentation had been submitted under the item.

62. **Mr. Mabhongo** (Observer for South Africa) said that South Africa was alarmed that, despite the efforts of the international community, contemporary forms of racism and xenophobia had been gaining political, moral and legal recognition, including through the platforms of political parties and organizations in some countries, in part owing to the misuse of modern communications technologies such as the Internet and social media platforms. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action remained the most comprehensive framework for combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; it recognized the past and present harm caused by racism and racial discrimination, focusing in particular on structural forms of racism and racial discrimination.

63. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was also important for long-term global initiatives such as the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and for advancing the recovery from the pandemic, which had accentuated structural forms of racism. All Member States were invited to participate in the high-level meeting to be held in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in September 2021, on the margins of the high-level week of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. The Council had an important role to play in combating structural racism and in ensuring that development opportunities were expanded to all people, regardless of their background, ethnicity or race. He therefore proposed that, in the light of the twentieth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Council should provide analysis of structural forms of racism, in particular their socioeconomic dimensions, together with practical recommendations for action at the national and international levels.

Agenda item 20: United Nations research and training institutes ([E/2021/7](#), [E/2021/12](#) and [E/2021/49](#); [E/2021/L.19](#) and [E/2021/L.22](#))

64. **Mr. Javan** (Director, United Nations System Staff College), speaking via video link and introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations System Staff College ([E/2021/12](#)), said that the COVID-19 pandemic had been the greatest challenge faced by the College since its inception, as the impossibility of face-to-face teaching had forced the institution to quickly reinvent itself in order to maintain

its commitment to the learning needs of United Nations staff and partners. In early 2020 the Staff College had become a fully online learning provider, with online learning accounting for 85 per cent of its total activities in 2020 – compared with only 24 per cent in 2019. Its participant numbers had risen by over 241 per cent, illustrating its seamless incorporation of digital learning and training practices. In the 2019–2020 biennium, the College had delivered learning initiatives, knowledge products and advisory services to over 57,000 beneficiaries across the globe. As an extrabudgetary organization, the College relied mainly on self-generated income derived from course fees and contracts for services from United Nations organizations. As such, its funding was directly related to its ability to produce high quality products and services. In that regard, feedback from end-of-course evaluations had been consistently positive, with a 96 per cent recommendation rate from respondents. A growing number of academic institutions sought to partner with the College, and it had been collaborating with several universities, including from the South.

65. The College remained committed to aligning its learning offerings with the key priorities of the United Nations global agenda. Over the last biennium, it had centred its learning support around economic and social development, peace and security and internal management of the United Nations system. In the area of sustainable development, the College had sought to bolster the knowledge base of organizations, civil society and United Nations entities. Among other initiatives in that field, it had partnered with the Development Coordination Office, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network to create an e-course, “Foundational Primer on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and to implement the “UNSDG: Learn” platform, which had been used by over 150 organizations and institutions. In terms of peace and security, the College had advocated a more comprehensive approach to sustaining peace that was informed by the complexity of the global landscape and that more directly addressed the root causes of conflicts. Specifically, it had developed courses on decentralized governance, human security and humanitarian-development-peace collaboration, as well as building capacity on climate security and the participation of women and youth in peace processes. To support management reforms, the College had developed a United Nations leadership culture assessment tool as a means to evaluate how teams within the Organization demonstrated the relevant leadership competencies. During the reporting period, the Staff College had also become the preferred partner of the Global Secretariat

for the delivery of managerial training. It had launched an online learning platform, the Blue Line, which provided United Nations staff with free access to a suite of self-paced learning pathways, thereby enabling the Organization to mainstream the skill sets deemed necessary for the modernization of its working methods.

66. The overall priority would remain strengthening the ability of United Nations staff and partners to learn and adapt to new ways of working, facilitating coherent progress within a multistakeholder framework. The College hoped that the Council would continue to recognize its unique role in enabling United Nations staff and stakeholders to adapt to challenges and in building a more effective and efficient United Nations system. The ability to swiftly adapt to the new demands of e-learning had allowed the College to provide a critical service to its beneficiaries, and its growth and success demonstrated the significant demand for its services within the United Nations and, increasingly, beyond. With the support of Member States, the College could make a key contribution to building the capacity of a new generation of international civil servants able to deliver a better future for all.

67. **Mr. Seth** (Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)), speaking via video link and introducing the report of the Secretary-General on UNITAR (E/2021/49), said that while the Institute continued its flagship work of diplomatic training, the scope of its programming had expanded to cover all the pillars of the work of the Organization: peace and security, economic development, social development and environmental sustainability. Its 2018–2021 strategic framework was structured around four pillars – peace, people, planet and prosperity – and three cross-cutting areas, which included accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, multilateral diplomacy and optimizing the use of technologies, especially satellite technologies, for evidence-based decision-making. In late 2019, UNITAR had integrated the Defeat Non-Communicable Diseases Partnership (Defeat-NCD Partnership), which supported low-income countries in reducing the incidence and impact of non-communicable diseases. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic it was important for training institutes like UNITAR to join the world in focusing on health.

68. The Institute had initially been severely affected by the pandemic as much of its work was delivered in the field, face to face, in developing countries. However, it had been able to maintain business continuity and currently delivered 80 per cent of its events online, allowing it to reach the largest audience in its 55-year

history – close to 350,000 beneficiaries. It had also significantly improved its outreach to female learners in 2020, and had reversed the male-female gender imbalance of previous years. In addition to changing its working methods, UNITAR had responded to the pandemic by broadening its activity portfolio to increase awareness and develop knowledge related to the crisis.

69. Describing some highlights of UNITAR work during the reporting period, he said that under the peace pillar, UNITAR had continued to pursue programming aligned with Goal 16. In addition to organizing high-level events and continuing to train police and military personnel to be deployed in United Nations peace operations, UNITAR had developed a number of new initiatives, including strengthening the capacities of women peacemakers in partnership with the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation and strengthening community-based reintegration processes, conflict-resolution mechanisms and community resilience and reconciliation in Colombia through youth-led peace efforts. Under the people pillar, UNITAR continued to promote well-being, including through the empowerment of marginalized groups. A significant initiative was its ongoing work with government authorities and other stakeholders to decrease road traffic fatalities and injuries. It had also launched the Global Surgery initiative to increase access to safe surgery. In the field of migration, UNITAR continued to lead a process for sharing best practices on mobility within urban centres. It had also recently opened its twenty-second International Training Centre for Authorities and Leaders. Under the planet pillar, UNITAR continued to participate in the One United Nations Climate Change Partnership, through which it offered an e-learning platform that brought together 36 United Nations entities. In addition, the Institute had continued to participate in the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, through which it supported countries to develop inclusive green economy plans, and was leading the Sustainable Cycles Programme, which was aimed at the sustainable production, consumption and disposal of products in different waste streams. Activities under the prosperity pillar included the Institute's ongoing collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to train officials and representatives of government ministries, agricultural and trade unions and expert organizations in sub-Saharan African countries and Central Asian countries, as well as a partnership with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa aimed at strengthening the capacities of financial officials to harness digital technologies to improve access to financial services for the unbanked and poorest populations.

70. In addition to its work under the thematic pillars, UNITAR continued to help Member States to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Jointly with the United Nations System Staff College, it steered the work of the UN SDG:Learn platform, and it had developed a statistical tool designed to help Member States to improve data production. The UNITAR Operational Satellite Applications Programme continued to provide Member States with satellite-related analysis and imagery; during the 2019–2020 period, it had provided over 400 satellite imagery analyses, resulting in the production of 1,438 maps, reports and other products. Multilateral diplomacy remained its flagship activity, with many delegates having benefited from the activities of the New York office, which had supported delegations to the Security Council, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council. The Institute continued its work on the Defeat-NCD Partnership and its assistance through the Partnership would soon be extended to developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

71. The progress made in UNITAR programmes was reflected in the positive feedback received from compliance mechanisms. The Institute was entirely funded through voluntary contributions, and remained in sound financial health. The UNITAR Strategic Framework Fund supported Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular allowed it to assist those who needed it the most – the 93 countries in special situations. He thanked the donors to the Fund, including Japan and the Swedish International Development Agency, the Fund's leading donor and expressed the hope that the adoption of the draft resolution on the Institute would provide UNITAR with greater impetus and financial support for its work on satellite-related imagery.

72. **Ms. McElwain** (Chief Operations Officer, United Nations University Centre for Policy Research), introducing the report of the Council of the United Nations University on the work of the University (E/2021/7) on behalf of the University Rector, said that, as the knowledge partner of the United Nations, the University connected diverse groups of stakeholders to generate and share research with a range of audiences. It accomplished that task by publishing reports focused on the United Nations and convening events to bring together policymakers and academics; communicating policy-relevant research findings; and providing training to researchers and Governments in developing countries. In September 2020, the University had marked its forty-fifth year of operation; during that time it had grown into a system of 14 research institutes spanning 12 countries. That global system was

coordinated by the United Nations University Centre in Tokyo, hosted by the Government of Japan.

73. The University's annual budget of approximately \$56 million was funded entirely by voluntary contributions and interest on an endowment fund. In 2020, approximately 55 per cent of its personnel had been female, with 50 per cent of institute directors being women and 42 per cent of all personnel coming from developing countries. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the University had been able to operate smoothly in most work areas throughout 2020, and had adapted its research agenda to contribute to a better understanding of and response to the pandemic. The University provided input to United Nations policymaking and connected the Organization with global academic communities to promote evidence-based policies. In particular, the University was helping policymakers to enhance their understanding of the interconnections among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the potential secondary effects of alternative implementation options.

74. The University had made a significant number of policy contributions in 2020, as well as carrying out a range of projects that either provided immediate practical benefits to vulnerable or marginalized populations or helped to build the academic and research capacities of individuals and institutions in the global South. Just one example of such a project was the "Early-Career Professionals" online workshop series of the University's Institute for Environment and Human Security, which enabled health researchers from the global South to engage with high-level health policy analysts and specialists. The University shared its findings with practitioners, policymakers, academics and affected populations, and it had come to be respected as an independent voice within the United Nations system. Although it did not often make headlines, it was consistently active behind the scenes, conducting research, feeding its findings and advice into the multilateral policy process and developing new ways to measure sustainable development and assess human welfare. The University anticipated that the continuing United Nations reform initiatives would generate future demand for its research findings and policy advice. The University would continue to collaborate with diverse global stakeholders in order to equip policymakers and decision-makers with the evidence and insights needed to help the United Nations and its Member States create a secure, equitable and sustainable future for all.

Draft resolution E/2021/L.19: United Nations System Staff College in Turin, Italy

75. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

76. **Mr. Dal Degan** (Observer for Italy), introducing the draft resolution, said that learning was indispensable to improve the quality and efficiency of the work of the United Nations system. Not only did learning enable the Organization to contend with unexpected challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, but it supported individual staff to thrive in a competitive, fast-paced work environment. For those reasons, it was important for Member States to support the United Nations System Staff College, both operationally and financially.

77. Italy was proud to host the United Nations System Staff College in Turin. The quality of its courses, its inter-agency vocation and the high recommendation rate of its learning products had been recognized by the Joint Inspection Unit in its latest report on learning policies, in which it recommended, inter alia, strengthening its role as a central learning hub for the United Nations system. Highlighting his country's track record of successful collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), he commended the Institute for its work, in particular for the expansion of its programming into new thematic areas, including health and nutrition.

78. *Draft resolution E/2021/L.19 was adopted.*

Draft resolution E/2021/L.22: United Nations Institute for Training and Research

79. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

80. **Mr. Lam Padilla** (Guatemala), introducing the draft resolution, said that, through the draft resolution, the Council would acknowledge the Institute's continued provision of services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and encourage it to continue to find new ways to support Member States, the United Nations system and other actors. In the draft resolution the Council also recognized the work of UNITAR in the areas of health and nutrition, which was particularly important in the current circumstances, and the alignment of its programme of work with the 2030 Agenda. In the text, the Council recognized the research that the Institute conducted with a view to reducing disaster risk, through its support for the recommendation that the Operational Satellite Applications Programme should be recognized as the United Nations satellite centre. The Council also encouraged the Institute to continue to develop training

programmes in a range of important areas. Its overall financial situation remained stable and he thanked Governments and other partners who had made voluntary contributions in support of its work.

81. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Council) said that the following delegations had become sponsors of the draft resolution: Algeria, Armenia, Bahrain, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Bulgaria, Chile, Cuba, Egypt, El Salvador, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Morocco, Mozambique, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, Sudan, Thailand and Zambia.

82. She then noted that the following delegations also wished to become sponsors: Costa Rica, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, South Africa and Ukraine.

83. *Draft resolution E/2021/L.22 was adopted.*

84. **The President** proposed that the Council take note of the report of the Council of the United Nations University on the work of the University, as contained in document E/2021/7.

85. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(k) United Nations Forum on Forests (*continued*)

86. **Ms. Barthelemy** (Director, Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), addressing questions that had been raised at the eighth plenary meeting of the Council, said that the recruitment of a director of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests was under way, pursuant to the improved liquidity situation of the Organization. On the matter of the resource requirements of the secretariat of the Forum, the Secretary-General's proposed programme plan and budget for 2022 was currently being considered by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, after which it would be reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee.

87. **Mr. Black** (Canada) said that the work of the secretariat of the Forum on Forests remained highly relevant. Discussions on the need to fill the D-2 position in the secretariat had been taking place since at least 2018. While his delegation appreciated that the liquidity crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic had disrupted many of the Organization's standard management practices, including hiring, it strongly encouraged the secretariat to prioritize the recruitment of a director, to enable the

United Nations to play the leadership role on forests that Member States expected and needed.

88. **Ms. Stern** (Australia) said that Australia strongly supported the United Nations Forum on Forests and had been proud to participate in the sixteenth session of the Forum. It was vital to implement the programme of work mandated by Member States, as well as the omnibus resolution of 2020 contained in document E/2020/42-E/CN.18/2020/9 – including timely recruitment as a matter of priority. Her delegation looked forward to working closely with the secretariat of the Forum in that regard.

89. **Mr. Schlaepfer** (Switzerland) said that Switzerland supported the statements made by the representatives of Canada and Australia, and appreciated the update on the status of the recruitment of a new director of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests. His delegation would continue to follow the situation closely.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.