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Chair: Ms. Frazier (Malta)
later: Mr. Krywulak (Vice-Chair) (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiola** (Mexico), speaking also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and the European Union, said that they were deeply concerned about the devastating and multifaceted effects the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the progress lost towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. More effective cooperation, solidarity and a strong multilateral system were essential to overcome the pandemic safely, equitably and sustainably. Several COVID-19 vaccines had been developed in record time, thanks to unprecedented scientific collaboration among Governments, international institutions, civil society and the private sector, but universal vaccination remained an imperative challenge. They urged Member States to fulfil their pledges to the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator and its vaccine pillar, the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility; to continue to provide financial and in-kind contributions and to include financial contributions to the ACT Accelerator and the COVAX Facility in their recovery plans as a sound investment in the future. While a significant number of vaccine donations had been made, they were concerned about undue stockpiling and the lack of access to vaccines in low and middle-income countries.

2. COVID-19 vaccines should be treated as a global public good. Extraordinary actions were needed to expand vaccine production globally through the voluntary dissemination of technology and know-how, including by using flexibilities in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights if needed. They encouraged all stakeholders to support

initiatives to promote increased local vaccine production, including the Vaccine Manufacturing Working Group of the ACT Accelerator Council.

3. Country preparedness was also important. Strong health systems were a cornerstone not only of successful vaccination but also of preparedness and resilience. Universal coverage was critical for health system resilience, as was routine immunization for communicable diseases in general. It was also essential to ensure the timely dissemination of accurate information and to address misinformation and disinformation about vaccines, and they commended the Verified initiative in that regard.

4. The States were committed to working together to achieve 70 per cent vaccination of the global population by September 2022; to improving pandemic preparedness, including through a One Health approach; to preventing future outbreaks from becoming pandemics and to strengthening global health systems and the World Health Organization (WHO), in particular its capacity to respond to health emergencies.

5. **Mr. Mezang Akamba** (Cameroon), noting the need for global solidarity and strong leadership, said that States had a duty to fulfil the commitments made in the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. Developed States must also honour their commitments regarding technology transfer, financing for development, climate change actions and resilience-building. Cameroon stressed the need to address the debt crisis confronting developing countries by making the Debt Service Suspension Initiative more flexible, inclusive and ambitious. It was also essential to ensure equitable and fair trade, close the digital divide and combat illegal financial flows and tax evasion, and Cameroon welcomed the decision of the Group of 20 to set a global minimum tax for corporations. More energy and resources were needed to address the myriad challenges facing humanity, including climate change, conflict, terrorism, cybercrime and fake news, pollution, environmental degradation and migration.

6. In that difficult global context, Cameroon had nevertheless continued to domesticate the Sustainable Development Goals and had made notable progress on the education and poverty Goals. However, its resources were strained by the impact of COVID-19 and security issues, and it needed additional funds, partnerships and expertise to address climate resilience, biodiversity and pollution, eradicate poverty and improve access to technology and innovation, as well as to save Lake Chad and revitalize the economy of the Lake Chad basin. In

that connection, it was grateful for the support of the resident coordinator, the United Nations Development Programme and development partners.

7. **Ms. Oh Hyunjoo** (Republic of Korea) said that, over the past 18 months, the international community had forged a consensus on key issues, from vaccine equity to stronger financing for development and the need for an inclusive recovery. It was time for action. To ensure universal, affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines, the Republic of Korea would continue to work to expand vaccine supply and support, serving as one of the global vaccine hubs. To tackle inequality at home, it had launched the Korean New Deal, which focused on reinforcing social safety nets and expanding investment in people, and it would continue to strengthen cooperation with partner countries to help them address the ongoing pandemic and transition to low-carbon and digitalized economies. To that end, her Government planned to scale up its official development assistance (ODA) for green technology, digitalization and health care.

8. The Republic of Korea had enacted a framework act on carbon neutrality and was finalizing an enhanced nationally determined contribution to be announced at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It would shut down coal-fired power plants earlier than scheduled, would end public financing for new overseas coal plants and was ramping up efforts to transition to solar, wind and hydrogen power. Her country had also announced its candidature to host the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties in 2023.

9. The Seoul Declaration adopted at the second summit of Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 highlighted the role of public-private partnerships in mobilizing investment to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Building on that momentum, her country would be hosting the Busan Global Partnership forum in November 2021 and the seventh Open Government Partnership summit in December 2021.

10. **Ms. Moldoisaeva** (Kyrgyzstan) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had forced her country to divert funds programmed for sustainable development to fighting the pandemic and repaying the external debt, and she called on Member States to support its appeal for debt relief to enable it to pursue sustainable development projects. An active advocate of the interests of landlocked mountain States, Kyrgyzstan would introduce a draft resolution to declare 2022 the international year of mountains at the current session of

the General Assembly. She invited delegations to participate in the planned presentation on a five-year program for sustainable mountain development and the convening of a second global mountain summit in 2027.

11. Kyrgyzstan was working to develop a targeted programme for the conservation, rehabilitation and reforestation of its mountain forests, which absorbed carbon dioxide and played a crucial role in water conservation. Its updated nationally determined contribution pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by around 16 per cent without additional assistance and by almost 44 per cent with sufficient international support. Its development plans included the construction of hydroelectric power stations and emphasized digitization.

12. **Ms. Eman Hussain** (Maldives) said that the pandemic had shown the depth and the breadth of the challenges for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. Redoubled effort was needed to implement development frameworks such as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

13. Travel restrictions had had a devastating effect on her country's tourism-dependent economy, which had shrunk by a third in 2020. In response, the Government had committed to an ambitious recovery plan that dovetailed with the 2030 Agenda. Failure to deal with climate change and its impacts would doom Maldives and other small island countries. However, despite the bleak sixth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, she believed that the world was on the cusp of transformational change.

14. The ocean was fundamentally intertwined with the Maldivian economy, climate and culture, and her Government was working with an array of specialists to address the stresses on it and ensure the sustainable use of its resources. Maldives was the world leader in sustainable tuna fisheries. However, unsustainable use of marine ecosystems beyond its borders was threatening the food security and economies of local communities. Given her country's exemplary stewardship of its tuna fisheries and the well-documented fiscal challenges of small island developing States, it made no sense to cancel the tariff concessions on its tuna exports. There was also an urgent need to finalize a multidimensional vulnerability index specific to small island developing States for use by the development banks, which still grouped them with much larger economies despite their unique situation.

15. **Mr. Aidid** (Malaysia), deploring the grossly imbalanced global vaccination rollout, said that vaccine

equity was an urgent development priority for the global South. Enhanced coordination, multilateral cooperation through the ACT Accelerator and the COVAX Facility and increased global production capacity were needed to ensure equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccines. To date, Malaysia had been able to vaccinate 89 per cent of the adult population.

16. Since 2016, the Sustainable Development Goals had been embedded in his country's five-year development plans, and it had recently presented its second voluntary national review. The developed countries must provide new, adequate and consistent financial assistance and technological transfer to support developing countries in their climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, including by mobilizing the pledged annual \$100 billion in climate finance. Malaysia had embraced the circular economy and had recently increased its nationally determined contribution to a target of a 45 per cent reduction in greenhouse gasses by 2030. To achieve that goal, it was developing plans to introduce carbon pricing and a carbon tax as well as to increase the share of renewable energy in its energy mix to 31 per cent by 2025.

17. Malaysia was rolling out a number of digital initiatives aimed at having the digital economy account for 25.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2025. To narrow the digital divide between city and country, Internet community centres would be established in rural areas.

18. As a trading nation, Malaysia attached great importance to a free and fair multilateral trading system, which would be critical to recovery from the pandemic. In addition, it wished to underscore the importance of international cooperation for strengthening global supply chain resilience and ensuring unimpeded cross-border flows of essential goods.

19. *Mr. Krywulak (Poland), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

20. **Mr. Espinosa Cañizares** (Ecuador) said that the topics considered by the Committee underscored the importance of multilateral solutions to global challenges. Ecuador remained committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework, and it urged other States to redouble their efforts to meet the Goals of the 2030 Agenda. It was essential to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments for developing countries and to base middle-income country eligibility for recovery programmes on multidimensional metrics, not just income.

21. His country's recently published development plan was closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The President of Ecuador had participated in the Food Systems Summit, sharing best practices, as well as in the high-level event on jobs and social protection for poverty eradication, where he had stressed the importance of a responsible, open economy.

22. In view of the pandemic, the decision to continue negotiating draft resolutions virtually and limit updates was a sensible one and would enable the Committee to continue to contribute to sustainable development.

23. **Mr. Kassaye** (Ethiopia) said that, given the heavy toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on many developing countries, urgent action was needed to ensure adequate and equitable distribution of the vaccines, including through increased vaccine production. In addition, the least developed countries needed development finance, debt relief and access to the \$650 billion in special drawing rights recently allocated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

24. The adverse effects of climate change continued to exacerbate socioeconomic problems in the developing world, particularly in countries whose economies depended on agriculture, and action was needed to mobilize the promised \$1 billion a year for climate mitigation and adaptation. Furthermore, the least developed countries should not be at the mercy of special trade regimes, and he called on all entities, including the United Nations agencies, to support regional free trade initiatives such as the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

25. In Ethiopia, thanks to broad economic reforms, the economy had continued to grow despite multiple exogenous shocks. In accordance with its obligation under the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Government had made enormous efforts to mobilize domestic resources, increasing tax revenues by more than a third in the previous two years alone. It was taking steps to reduce the risk of debt distress and was on track to meet its goal of moderate debt distress by 2023. Regarding climate, in July the nationally determined contribution had been increased to achieve a 68 per cent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030, and around 40 adaptation interventions had been identified in agriculture alone.

26. **Mr. Ibragimov** (Uzbekistan) said that addressing the effects of COVID-19, including by ensuring equal and fair access to vaccines, required a global response based on unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation. Uzbekistan continued to pursue far-reaching socioeconomic reforms. Its Sustainable Development Goals included concrete targets, 85 per cent of which fell within the Committee's mandate.

Inspired by its goal of joining the upper middle-income countries by 2030, his country had offered to host a conference to study the problems of global economic recovery and best practices in poverty reduction following the pandemic.

27. With respect to climate change mitigation and adaptation, Uzbekistan aimed to double energy efficiency by 2030 by increasing the share of renewable energy to 25 per cent and developing clean transportation. It would host a high-level international forum on green energy in 2022 in cooperation with the United Nations, and it was prepared to host a meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. To speed the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, Uzbekistan stood ready to host a meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the framework. It had proposed the convening of a sixth session of the United Nations Environmental Assembly in Uzbekistan in 2023 and wished to see the development of a global environmental charter.

28. **Ms. Juul** (Norway) said that bold and committed multilateral cooperation was necessary to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and address the catastrophic socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic. There was a need for better global preparedness and response, including sustainable financing.

29. The United Nations development system had responded effectively to the crisis under the leadership of the resident coordinators. Flexible sources of financing, especially core funding and inter-agency pooled funds, would remain critical in its common response. The COVID-19 pandemic would continue to be a test of the system's ability to deliver.

30. The pandemic had reversed years of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, which nevertheless provided a road map for responding to the crisis and building back better. National ownership and resource mobilization were crucial, as was sustainable development funding. Countries in debt distress should seek and receive debt relief from both public and private creditors, and every effort should be made to prevent corruption, tax evasion and other financial crimes, which drained public resources.

31. Building a sustainable ocean economy was critical to achieving the Goals. In that connection, many Member States were facing increasingly frequent and dangerous climate-related disasters. In situations of conflict, post-conflict and recurring humanitarian crises, climate change, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity could compound existing vulnerabilities and exacerbate intercommunal grievances. Unfortunately,

many of the hardest hit countries were the least equipped to deal with environmental crises. Climate change threatened the very existence of some small island developing States.

32. The pandemic had had a disproportionate impact on women and girls. A gender lens should be applied to response and recovery, and women should be involved in all related decisions. Human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality must be at the core of response and recovery efforts.

33. Grappling successfully with all the challenges mentioned would require a more collaborative, coherent, integrated, accountable and efficient United Nations development system. Follow-through on the key mandates of General Assembly resolution [75/33](#) on quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system was therefore a Norwegian priority.

34. **Ms. Cedano** (Dominican Republic) said that the current challenges required a truly multilateral response. It was essential to reduce the inequalities exacerbated by COVID-19, which eroded confidence in multilateral institutions, and to address structural flaws. Recovery efforts should also include improving resilience and sustainability and preparing for future crises.

35. Most of the developed world was well on its way to economic recovery, while the developing world contended with debt and a dangerous and unacceptable lack of access to the vaccines. Latin America and the Caribbean faced additional multidimensional challenges for progress and resilience, including persistent problems with fiscal redistribution and access gaps in health care and social protection.

36. The Dominican Republic attached a high priority to support for multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, which would have a critical role in sustainable and equitable recovery. Given that small island developing States were particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, they should receive priority access to concessional financing for climate mitigation and adaptation.

37. **Mr. Hikmat** (Tajikistan) said that the pandemic had challenged public health systems and economies worldwide and had forced countries to realign their priorities. It had also demonstrated the importance of multilateral cooperation and solidarity. Tajikistan welcomed the United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 and the Secretary-General's call for vaccine equity. It also welcomed the efforts of the organizations and United Nations agencies providing vaccines and immediate and long-term assistance.

38. More than 90 per cent mountainous, Tajikistan was experiencing changes in the hydrological cycle leading to severe floods and droughts and costing public coffers almost \$500 million annually. In addition, over the past 30-to-40 years, it had lost almost a third of its glaciers, one of the main sources of fresh water for it and the region as a whole. To raise awareness of the issue, his delegation would present a draft resolution declaring 2025 the international year for the preservation of glaciers at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly.

39. In September 2021, Tajikistan and a number of other Member States had organized a high-level side event on how changing water availability from ice and snow would impact societies – the first in a series of events intended to give impetus to collective action within the framework of the Paris Agreement. The International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, initiated by Tajikistan, had paved the way for the first United Nations water conference in 50 years, which Tajikistan and the Netherlands would be hosting in New York in 2023. To kickstart dialogues with Member States in preparation for the conference, he invited all delegations to attend the next meeting of the Group of Friends of Water, to be held virtually on 15 October 2021.

40. **Mr. Hmoud** (Jordan) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had laid bare wide divergences among States in information and communications technology. Closing the sustainable development investment gap would be crucial for recovery. Debt restructuring, including for middle-income countries, could help to channel investments into infrastructure, the digital economy, alternative energy and green growth.

41. To meet the challenges to development posed by climate change, his country had launched its Green Growth National Action Plan 2021–2025, which integrated green economic policies into sectoral strategies and had actually raised climate change targets. Jordan looked forward to taking part in the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. On the occasion of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, Jordan had called for greater coordination in implementation of the three Rio conventions.

42. His country had just put forward its first national food security strategy and had been pleased to take part in the Food Systems Summit just held during the high-level week of the current session. His Government was

continuing its efforts to bring about a national energy transformation in line with Goal 7 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It was also moving ahead with poverty eradication efforts, although, as in other countries, those efforts had been hampered by the pandemic.

43. **Mr. Margaryan** (Armenia), noting the devastating effects of the pandemic, said that Armenia appreciated the support that the United Nations system provided to many countries, including his own, for addressing the needs of vulnerable populations and deploying COVID-19 vaccines. A strong and efficient United Nations system with adequate human and financial resources was critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

44. Accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 was vital to address the structural constraints and special development challenges of those countries. During the pandemic, the disruption of supply chains, travel restrictions and border closures had been particularly hard on countries in special situations, including landlocked developing countries, owing to their systemic vulnerabilities. Their efficient cooperation with transit countries and the unblocking of all regional transport communications were essential for the free movement of people, goods and services.

45. Incendiary rhetoric and threats to create corridors by force, the continuation of land blockade policies and the imposition of unilateral coercive measures violated international law and undermined peace, stability and sustainable development in the region.

46. Armenia was pursuing ambitious, people-centred reforms that emphasized human capital development, innovation, green technologies, good governance, judicial reform and combating corruption. The economic empowerment of women and youth was an important priority, and to date women’s participation in the information, communications and technology sector had been increased to 40 per cent. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Armenia and the United Nations Development Programme country programme document for 2021–2025 provided valued support for the aforementioned efforts.

47. **Ms. Mealea Heng** (Cambodia) said that universal access to the COVID-19 vaccines was critical, because without universal vaccination the virus could mutate and return. The best way to end the pandemic was to declare COVID-19 vaccines a public good, although vaccine-producing countries should continue to donate vaccines to developing countries. Recovery efforts should

include steps to strengthen health-care systems and provide universal health coverage in anticipation of future pandemics. In Cambodia, more than 90 per cent of people 18 years of age and older had been vaccinated, and a third dose was being rolled out.

48. To rebuild their economies, developing countries needed open global trade, multilateral agreements and preferential treatment, including improved quota-free and duty-free access to markets, debt relief, debt service suspension and financial support for recovery. They also needed public and private investment to enable businesses to digitalize. There should be a continued emphasis on promoting small and medium-sized enterprises, supply chain connections, climate change awareness, green infrastructure and disaster risk reduction.

49. **Ms. Motsumi** (Botswana) said that in the light of the problems exposed or aggravated by the pandemic, Botswana was more concerned than ever about the ability of developing countries to implement the 2030 Agenda. Fair, broad and fast access to COVID-19 vaccines was a prerequisite, but implementation would also require enhanced financing, trade, technology transfer, debt sustainability and multilateral and international cooperation. As a middle-income landlocked country, Botswana relied heavily on partnerships and multilateralism. Its recovery efforts included initiatives to ensure efficient vaccination rollout, accelerate digitalization in the delivery of services, encourage private-sector involvement and develop value chains in mining, tourism, agriculture and education.

50. With the midpoint of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 rapidly approaching, those countries were counting on the support of the Committee in their preparations for a comprehensive review of its implementation, which would examine the impact of the pandemic and the climate crisis.

51. **Ms. Mudallali** (Lebanon) said that it was morally unacceptable for COVID-19 vaccines to remain the privilege of the few. That was why Lebanon had initiated a political declaration on equitable global access to them during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. Given the yawning vaccination gap between poor and wealthy countries, the leaders of the Group of 20 should give the issue of vaccine equity the highest priority at their upcoming meeting.

52. Thanks to the COVAX Facility and international partners, Lebanon had been able to vaccinate 20 per cent of its population. Her country was facing an existential socioeconomic crisis, exacerbated by the pandemic and

the Beirut port explosion, which had forced it to adjust its priorities to focus on poverty eradication, food security, vaccination and access to energy, water, education and health services. Its efforts were complemented by a United Nations-led emergency response plan. To address the crisis, the new Government was expanding its cash-transfer programme in collaboration with the World Bank and was taking steps to launch negotiations with IMF on a comprehensive assistance programme. Although determined to explore its oil and gas resources, Lebanon had set a goal of 30 per cent of electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030 and had submitted a nationally determined contribution committing it to cut carbon emissions by 20 per cent by 2030. Her delegation was counting on the Member States once again to adopt the draft resolution on the oil slick on Lebanese shores, which requested Israel to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to Lebanon.

53. **Mr. Sabbagh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had undermined years of development efforts. His country's suffering had been compounded by the terrorist war launched against it and the hostile approach of certain Governments. Unilateral coercive measures imposed by Western States continued to stand in the way of the Syrian people's access to food, medicine and fuel, despite calls by numerous international officials – not least the Secretary-General – for those States to desist from their illegal and inhumane policies. Even so, the Syrian Arab Republic had pressed ahead with its Syria 2030 development strategy and had even presented a voluntary national review in 2020.

54. The United Nations could play an important role in his country's development efforts provided that international agencies operating in the Syrian Arab Republic stayed within the confines of their technical mandates and steered clear of the politicization practised by certain donor States. Peoples suffering under foreign occupation faced additional impediments to sustainable development. In that connection, he reminded the Committee of the importance of its annual draft resolution on the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources.

55. **Ms. Chan Valverde** (Costa Rica) said that the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters and the financial crisis had highlighted gaps in national systems and inequalities between and within countries. The pandemic had demonstrated the interconnectedness of humanity and the close connection between human well-being and the well-being of the planet. However, humanity continued to invest more in destroying nature

than in preserving it. Nature-based solutions could address crises holistically, since in addition to strengthening ecosystems, they provided long-term social and economic benefits.

56. The High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People sought to protect 30 per cent of the world's land and oceans by 2030. All States needed to take climate action, and it was essential for the developed States to provide the \$100 billion for climate finance pledged for 2020 and substantially more thereafter in order to assist the most vulnerable States. Costa Rica had proposed a COVID-19 economic relief fund of half a trillion dollars to offer one-off support for developing countries, which would be funded with 0.7 per cent of GDP of the world's strongest economies and disbursed by one or more multilateral development banks in the form of long-term, fixed-rate concessional loans.

57. While donor countries had contributed \$16 billion in ODA in 2020, it represented only about 1 per cent of what they had mobilized in economic stimulus for their own countries, and it fell far short of the \$2.5 trillion rescue package that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development had recommended for developing countries. The creation of \$650 billion in special drawing rights was a positive step, but that was only half of what had originally been recommended. Developed countries had a duty to fund programmes and recovery funds, capitalize development banks and enable more soft financing, including for vulnerable middle-income countries, so that developing countries could invest in social protection rather than cutting back. Recovery would not be sustainable or resilient if it was not inclusive.

58. **Ms. Vilmenay Joseph** (Haiti) said that the international financial institutions and international partners should abandon the one-size-fits-all approach and instead evaluate each country individually in concert with the national authorities. Bold measures were needed to speed recovery and ensure development for all.

59. Recalling the earthquake and hurricane that had devastated in Haiti in 2021, she said that it was time to move from words to action on leaving no one behind. All low and middle-income countries should have a universal social safety net, which in the case of Haiti would require a new strategy for supporting national development efforts. With respect to the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the COVAX initiative and bilateral actions of solidarity provided hope that the disease could be overcome.

60. Her delegation urged greater international mobilization to accelerate the financing for development

follow-up process and the outcomes of the United Nations conferences on financing for development. It also reaffirmed its support for the initiatives of Member States to address global vulnerabilities and to develop a multidimensional vulnerability index. Last but not least, it was deeply grateful to the partners and friends of Haiti for their support to national efforts to improve the living conditions of the Haitian people.

61. **Mr. Hill** (United States of America) said that his country was leading the global response to the pandemic and would continue to press for rapid distribution of COVID-19 vaccines globally. To date, it had given \$4 billion to the COVAX Facility, and it would purchase an additional 500 million Pfizer vaccine doses for distribution by the Facility through 2022. In addition, it had donated 160 million doses from its domestic stockpile and would donate more as they become available.

62. It was also critical to ensure access to COVID-19-related medical equipment and supplies. More generally, the international community must work together to improve health system resilience, with a particular focus on equitable access to prevention and treatment.

63. The United States was deferring debt payments for the least developed countries through the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, and it also supported the Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative. In addition, it was seeking to catalyse clean and sustainable private-sector investments in transformative sectors.

64. At the Food Security Summit in September, the President of the United States had pledged \$10 billion to accelerate progress towards ending hunger and malnutrition and building more sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems. With respect to climate change, the President had announced in April that the United States would double its public international climate finance by 2024 and triple the amount dedicated to adaptation, and in his recent remarks at the annual general debate of the General Assembly, he had doubled that pledge. Together with increased private capital and contributions from other donors, the United States would be able to meet the goal of mobilizing \$100 billion to support climate action in developing countries.

65. Given the pivotal role of the United Nations in addressing the crisis and achieving sustainable and inclusive global recovery, it was more necessary than ever for the Committee to streamline and prioritize its work. The United States remained committed to upholding the rules-based international order and to

working with the Committee to advance the 2030 Agenda, including by taking a refreshed approach to addressing vulnerabilities in fragile and conflict-affected States.

66. **Mr. Francis** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that while the multilayered crisis threatened development gains achieved under the 2030 Agenda, that instrument provided a blueprint for recovery and beyond. His delegation wished to stress, first, that “building back green” could improve resilience, strengthen disaster risk reduction and reduce biodiversity loss and climate change. Sustainable development would be impossible without stemming climate change, and his country had committed to reduce national carbon emissions by 15 per cent by 2030. Member States must ensure effective implementation of the Paris Agreement by making and honouring enhanced commitments.

67. Second, it was necessary to close the digital divide. Digitalization presented a host of opportunities for developing countries to diversify their economies, boost manufacturing and build resilience. Technology solutions, capacity-building and accelerated transfer of environmentally sound technologies would enable greater innovation and productivity and allow the most vulnerable to take advantage of digitalization. The digitalization strategy of Trinidad and Tobago focused on cultivating domestic capacity.

68. Third, it was essential to address the enormous financing gap. International cooperation for small island developing States such as Trinidad and Tobago, which had borne the brunt of the COVID-19 crisis, must be deepened and strengthened.

69. **Ms. Supatashvili** (Georgia) said that the devastating impact of COVID-19 made it all the more urgent for Member States to recommit to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The only way to end the pandemic was to ensure equitable and affordable access to the COVID-19 vaccines for all. Georgia had had taken steps to contain the virus and had implemented a wide range of measures to support the business sector and expand the social safety net. Thanks to the gradual lifting of restrictions and to recovery in the agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors, the national economy was expected to grow by 8.5 percent in 2021.

70. In accordance with the Paris Agreement, Georgia had submitted an updated, more ambitious nationally determined contribution, and it was working on a long-term low-emission development strategy for the period up to 2050.

71. Georgia had spared no effort to align its national policies with the Goals and remained committed to a human rights-based approach to their implementation. It was working to nationalize the indicator methodologies, had developed a plan for localizing the Goals in all municipalities by 2025 and recognized the importance of digital technologies for achieving both the Goals and economic recovery. Goal 16 on just, peaceful and inclusive societies remained a priority, and she expressed regret that Georgians living under Russian occupation in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia could not benefit from her Government’s commitment to building back stronger and leaving no one behind.

72. **Mr. Vorshilov** (Mongolia), noting the multidimensional impact of the pandemic in all countries, said that events such as the second Sustainable Development Goals Moment and the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development had been useful for exploring approaches to recovery that would help to achieve the Goals. While his country’s economy had shrunk by 4.5 per cent in 2020, it was expected to bounce back in 2021–2022 under the impetus of relief and economic stimulus measures and the favourable external environment. Mongolia had managed to vaccinate 65 per cent of its population against COVID-19, thanks to bilateral assistance, the COVAX Facility and government procurement, and it had begun rolling out vaccine boosters in August 2021.

73. To implement the 2030 Agenda, his Government had established eight intersectoral working groups to identify national Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators in line with long-term development policy, and it had recently organized a high-level national forum on the Goals. In the aftermath of the pandemic, it would focus on structural reforms, diversifying the economy, promoting investment and maintaining fiscal and financial stability. With Internet penetration at 68 per cent, it planned to make at least 90 per cent of public services available online as part of its digitalization initiative.

74. Mongolia faced many environmental problems, including the loss of biodiversity, a water shortage, air pollution and, its top priority, desertification. To address the latter, the President had recently launched a national campaign to plant a billion trees by 2030 and had issued a decree requiring annual public spending of at least 1 per cent of GDP on combating climate change and desertification. In addition, his Government was working to develop a national programme and strategy in that area.

75. In conclusion, he underlined his delegation's support for the Committee's efforts to update and improve its working methods and practices.

76. **Ms. Lek** (Singapore) said that the ongoing pandemic was one of the greatest challenges in recent history. Singapore welcomed the theme of the Committee's general debate, "Crisis, resilience and recovery: accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda", which would reinforce the role of the United Nations as an inclusive and universal platform to build consensus around response and recovery efforts. It also welcomed the Secretary-General's report, *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982), which contained important ideas for repositioning and adapting the United Nations system.

77. Her delegation had three priorities. First, steps should be taken to strengthen the rules-based multilateral system, including by reinvigorating multilateral institutions – for example, strengthening the global health architecture to prepare for future pandemics and updating the World Trade Organization rule book to address new economic realities.

78. Second, measures were needed to keep markets and global supply chains open. The unimpeded flow of essential goods and services was critical to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for small States such as hers. As a transshipment hub, Singapore had done its part during the pandemic by partnering with other countries to strengthen supply chains, and it would take a safe, gradual approach to reopening its borders.

79. Third, COVID-19 had accelerated the pace and scale of the digital revolution. It was important to use that opportunity to realize the potential of the digital economy, close the digital divide and shape the global digital infrastructure. Singapore had concluded digital economy agreements with several of its partners and looked forward to working closely with all countries to build a global digital architecture that was open, inclusive, interoperable and multi-stakeholder.

80. The world faced other complex challenges, including climate change and inequality, and her delegation would work closely with all delegations in the Committee to strengthen their collective ability to respond to all of them and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

81. **Mr. Nunes** (Timor-Leste) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had severely affected his country's health-care system and had pushed more people into extreme poverty. As a small island developing State with an agriculture and tourism-dependent economy, Timor-

Leste was highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and had developed a national adaptation plan emphasizing ecosystem resilience, reforestation and sustainable land management.

82. His Government was prioritizing the Sustainable Development Goals in national recovery efforts, which included a special fund for the purchase of medicine and equipment, a food basket and voucher programme, subsidies for businesses and support measures for informal workers. The legislation of Timor-Leste provided the basis for empowering women and girls in the development process, and it had one of the highest percentages of women in Parliament.

83. Welcoming the Secretary-General's emphasis on multilateralism and solidarity, he reiterated the importance of realizing the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 and called on all States to fulfil their commitments under the Paris Agreement in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Countries in special situations needed the support of development partners, the United Nations system and the international financial institutions to respond to the pandemic and pre-existing challenges at the same time.

84. **Mr. Segura Aragon** (El Salvador) said that urgent multilateral action was needed to combat the impact of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve resilient and sustainable recovery. To that end, States must honour their commitments under the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and other international instruments, bearing in mind the three pillars of sustainable development.

85. For developing countries to move forward on the Sustainable Development Goals, their debts must be sustainable. As a middle-income country, El Salvador urged the United Nations system and the international financial institutions to implement methodologies for measuring multidimensional poverty that were not based solely on per capita income. It was important to identify alternative financing mechanisms based on South-South and triangular cooperation and mediated by alternative financial institutions of and for the South.

86. Current levels of climate finance were insufficient to address the climate crisis. Developed countries must honour their financing commitment under the Paris Agreement, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and they must increase financial and technological support for adaptation, mitigation and risk management. They must also honour their commitment to ensure clean technology transfer and sound natural resource management. In addition, it

was essential to re-establish the vital role of nature-based solutions.

87. Following the launch of a Central American Integration System (SICA) initiative to address agriculture, forestry and other land use in the region, national committees had been established and work had begun on a regional management capacity-building programme and a regional monitoring and reporting system. In addition, SICA had joined the Bonn Challenge, pledging to restore 8 million hectares as part of its effort to achieve regional carbon neutrality by 2040.

88. His Government welcomed the recent Food Systems Summit and was committed to improving food and nutrition security and social welfare. To that end, it had developed poverty and hunger reduction initiatives and a healthy school meals strategy, and it had recently joined the School Meals Coalition.

89. **Mr. Aldehani** (Kuwait) said that from the onset of the pandemic, his country had been quick to support international efforts, having contributed \$40 million to the COVAX vaccine access programme and over \$327 million to various agencies, including WHO. Although the pandemic had unquestionably set back progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, he hoped for significant achievements on climate change and the environment in the coming years. The second Sustainable Development Goals Moment, which had just been held during the high-level week of the current session, had highlighted the importance of revitalizing collective action. The post-pandemic period would offer an opportunity to revive the economies of developing and developed States alike. In that regard, he was proud to note that the Kuwait Fund for Development had distributed upwards of 1,000 loans to over 100 countries at a total value of more than \$22 billion.

90. **Mr. Woodroffe** (United Kingdom) said that the Committee must be a venue for taking forward the outcomes of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. His delegation hoped that it would build further consensus around ambitious targets on forests, land and ocean conservation ahead of the Convention on Biological Diversity negotiations. It was pleased that so far more than 100 countries had joined the initiative to protect at least 30 per cent of global oceans by 2030.

91. Noting that the United Kingdom had used its presidency of the Group of Seven to mobilize 1 billion vaccine doses and over \$10 billion in financing for the COVAX Facility, he urged the Committee to continue to

champion equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. Doing so would require a multi-stakeholder approach with the principle of leaving no one behind at its core. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls should be included in all recovery strategies.

92. The Committee should place the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States at the heart of its efforts, without neglecting the specific problems of conflict and post-conflict countries and middle-income countries. For its part, the United Kingdom had hosted a ministerial meeting on climate and development in early 2021 that had resulted, inter alia, in the launch with Fiji of a task force to improve that country's access to finance. In addition, together with the Alliance of Small Island States, Fiji and Belize, it had led a series of discussions on their challenges for accessing concessional finance which had culminated the previous day in a set of specific recommendations.

93. His country remained committed to implementing the Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative. As a member of the Group of Seven, it was also working to support IMF efforts to develop multiple options for channelling the \$650 billion special drawing right allocation.

94. **Mr. Kapisyzi** (Albania) said that Governments should strengthen national health systems in order to improve the global response to future pandemics, and they should support equitable, universal access to vaccines. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council for 2022–2023, Albania would work to ensure that the climate-security nexus highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic remained on its agenda.

95. With respect to sustainable development, Albania was one of the United Nations “delivering as one” pilot countries. With an eye towards European integration, his Government was working hard to accelerate its implementation of the 2030 Agenda as part of its national development strategy. It had undertaken wide-reaching judicial reforms to promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice, and it was implementing structural reforms that would increase productivity and competitiveness, create jobs and improve public service delivery. It was also building strong partnerships with civil society, academia and business to address the underlying causes of poverty and inequality. As a result of steps taken to empower women, two thirds of the members of the Government were women.

96. **Mr. Bastaki** (United Arab Emirates) said that since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, his country had provided medical assistance to over 136 other

States. Dependence on remote working arrangements during the pandemic had highlighted the need for a digital transformation. Along with Germany, his country had co-chaired the working group that had produced the Secretary-General's Road Map for Digital Cooperation.

97. It was crucial for the recovery to focus on green development. In October 2021, his Government had launched a strategy for reaching climate neutrality by the year 2050. It firmly believed that climate neutrality should be the new model for development investment. The United Arab Emirates had provided support in the amount of \$16.8 billion to renewable energy projects in over 70 different countries and had offered to host the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in 2023. In October 2021, it would be hosting the pandemic-delayed Expo 2020 Dubai, which it hoped would be a milestone in the post-pandemic global recovery.

98. **Mr. Takht Ravanchi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the COVID-19 pandemic was a reminder that the development, welfare and prosperity of all human beings were interdependent. Unjust, illegal and self-serving unilateral actions were undermining multilateralism when it was needed most. Unilateral coercive measures by the United States and inaction by the international community had turned the pivotal idea of sustainable development – that no one should be left behind – into an empty promise, as such measures were designed to deny the targeted countries their right to development. In the midst of a global health crisis, unilateral coercive measures were paralysing national health-care systems in total disregard for Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals on health and well-being for all.

99. Despite all constraints, including the unlawful unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and its reimposition of illegal sanctions, the Islamic Republic of Iran was pressing forward with its efforts to create a more prosperous and sustainable future. It ranked fifty-ninth among 166 countries in the Sustainable Development Report 2020, and it had all but achieved the goals of ending illiteracy and providing universal free public education. Women accounted for half of all university students, almost a third of faculty and more than a third of medical doctors, and there had been a 60 per cent increase in their appointment to decision-making positions. His country had made astonishing progress in the area of biotechnology and stem cell research and was a COVID-19 vaccine manufacturer.

100. Subject to sand and dust storms, the Islamic Republic of Iran hosted the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management and was voluntarily funding it. It had instituted a national plan to address desertification and drought and was pursuing cooperation with other affected countries in the region. Its massive investment in reliable and sustainable infrastructure had resulted in nearly universal access to electricity and gas, and it supported the outcomes of the recent high-level dialogue on energy.

101. **Mr. Beleván** (Peru) said that the COVID-19 pandemic presented an opportunity to make the changes necessary to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and prevent future crises. Innovation was key, but development finance strategies that placed greater emphasis on risk and resilience would also be important.

102. In addressing the increasing vulnerability of food systems, it would be necessary to strike a balance between economic efficiency and resilience. Food system resilience was particularly important in rural areas, where already high malnutrition rates would likely be exacerbated by climate change-related food shortages. Vulnerable groups such as rural children should be identified immediately and placed at the centre of resilience-building efforts. Progress towards ending poverty and hunger had stalled during the pandemic; hence the significance of the Food Systems Summit, which could be a springboard for transitioning to sustainable, resilient food systems.

103. During the pandemic Peru had supplemented the existing social safety net with an economic support programme incorporating digital payments in order to reach more people. One of the principal obstacles to its recovery was its classification by the World Bank as a high middle-income country, which inaccurately reflected its development; the Multidimensional Poverty Index would paint a much more accurate picture. Since mid-2020, Peru had been developing its own multidimensional index in order to monitor instances of unfulfilled basic necessities more precisely.

104. **Ms. Almuharraqi** (Bahrain) said that her Government's 2019–2022 Programme of Action and Economic Vision 2030 strategy had aligned national plans with the Sustainable Development Goals. Bahrain was determined not to let the pandemic delay development. The commitment of Bahrain to partnership with the United Nations was reflected in the strategic cooperation and sustainable development framework agreement that it had just signed with the

office of the United Nations resident coordinator for the 2021–2022 period.

105. Bahrain had taken proactive steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate its impact. Testing, treatment and vaccinations were available free of charge in Bahrain to citizens, residents and visitors alike. More than 80 per cent of those eligible had received two vaccine doses. The health sector had been further enhanced with the opening by WHO of an office in Bahrain. Her Government had also taken measures to mitigate the economic effects of the pandemic, including a \$12 billion assistance package for businesses and individuals. Education had continued uninterrupted at all levels in Bahrain during the pandemic owing to innovative use of remote learning.

106. As an island State, Bahrain was extremely concerned about climate change. It had put in place national plans to increase renewable energy and lower carbon emissions, and looked forward to reinvigorated multilateral efforts emerging from the upcoming twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

107. **Mr. Yabou** (Gambia) said that that the effects of the pandemic would apparently be a permanent factor in his country's development. Therefore, during its midterm review of the national development plan, his Government had analysed the impact of the pandemic on the various sectors as the starting point for future action. In the light of that analysis, it had adopted a medium-term fiscal policy framework, secured debt deferrals from most of the country's creditors and introduced strategies to support appropriate medium-term financing. However, as those measures were not sufficient to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, he urged the international community to consider substantial debt relief for the least developed countries.

108. His Government was continuing to address youth unemployment by expanding skills development. In response to climate change-related windstorms and flooding, it was implementing long-term measures to promote recovery and resilience by strengthening decentralized governance structures, implementing social safety net measures and developing early warning and early action schemes. Noting that prior to the pandemic, tourism had accounted for 25 per cent of GDP, he urged other Governments to look at ways of easing travel restrictions.

109. To counter the effects of climate change and the pandemic, he called for worldwide partnerships to support climate-smart agricultural technologies and efficient transport systems and markets. Enhanced

international trade was essential for food security in food deficient countries, and agricultural development was fundamental for the eradication of rural poverty.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.