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High-level segment

Summary record of the 13th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 15 March 2023, at 10 a.m.

President: Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria)

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

Agenda item 5: High-level segment on accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels *(continued)*

(c) Development Cooperation Forum *(continued)*
(E/2023/48)

Summary of the first day of discussions

1. **Mr. Glennie** (Co-Founder, Global Nation), delivering a keynote address, said that global public investment and circular cooperation were particularly promising ideas and should be given serious consideration in the lead-up to the next International Conference on Financing for Development and in crafting the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. According to the concept of global public investment, international development assistance should be treated systematically as a public investment; the current ad hoc system of non-binding pledges should be replaced with structured fiscal transfers to invest in the global common good. While the burden of payment would still fall heaviest on the wealthiest countries, it was time to move away from the somewhat patronizing donor-recipient binary.

2. Unlike traditional international cooperation, which was based on the premise that ‘developed’ countries were repositories of knowledge and know-how to be shared with ‘developing’ countries, circular cooperation recognized the fact that all countries had expertise that could contribute to development in other parts of the world, including in wealthier countries. Circular cooperation would do away with recipient status and establish development cooperation in which all cooperated and all benefited, building on the expertise of all parties.

3. **Ms. Rangaprasad** (Director, Policy and Advocacy, Financing for Development, Society for International Development), delivering a keynote address and speaking also on behalf of the Civil Society Financing for Development Mechanism, said that financing for development was rooted in the right to development and the commitment to promote an enabling economic environment, embodied in the Declaration on the Right to Development. The countries of the global South had long pushed for the establishment of a new international economic order, as well as for the restoration of the United Nations to its central role in normative decision-making on global finance. Democratization of global economic governance

remained the core issue of multilateral development finance.

4. The current confluence of crises provided an opportunity to work towards a consensus on a new global economic governance architecture, including for official development assistance (ODA). With few exceptions, the developed countries had never met their commitment to contribute 0.7 per cent of gross national income to ODA, resulting over the years in a cumulative ODA shortfall of \$5 trillion. A legally binding framework, in the form of a United Nations convention on development assistance, was needed to enforce that bare minimum contribution.

5. A systemic approach to international financing for development must include conventions and legally binding instruments. She urged the codification of the Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/319, and welcomed General Assembly resolution 77/244 entitled “Promotion of inclusive and effective international tax cooperation at the United Nations”, which opened the way for intergovernmental discussions on an international tax cooperation framework or instrument.

6. **Mr. Murillo Ferrer** (Colombia) said that his delegation had particularly appreciated the concept of circular cooperation. It was important to recognize and utilize the unique, experiential knowledge of all countries, regardless of their income level. It was also important to continue to increase the visibility and importance of South-South and triangular cooperation. However, for the countries in the global South to realize their potential to contribute to their own development, they needed adequate fiscal space. A new approach to development cooperation was required to close the tremendous gap between currently available financing and the funds required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to comply with the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

7. **Ms. Jacobs** (Observer for South Africa) said that she agreed with the need to institutionalize development financing mechanisms and principles, and with the importance of the convening power of the United Nations. It was essential to bring the discussions on development finance into the United Nations, where all Member States had a voice.

8. **Ms. Albornoz** (Observer for Ecuador) said that holistic and vigorous action was needed to improve implementation capacity, not only at the central government level but also regionally and locally.

Development cooperation could also be enhanced through creative approaches such as circular cooperation. South-South cooperation and technology transfer between similar countries could be much more effective than other mechanisms but was often limited by inadequate funding. In that vein, steps must be taken to ensure that the debt burden of developing countries did not undermine development, especially in view of the additional challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, inflation and the food and energy crises. All of the foregoing should be addressed both multilaterally and bilaterally.

9. **Ms. Narváez Ojeda** (Chile) said that the concept of circular cooperation provided a new, almost indispensable approach to grappling with the challenges confronting middle-income countries. Embracing it required a redefinition of power relationships that was very much in line with feminist theory. By implementing a feminist foreign policy, Chile was endeavouring to combine feminism and circular cooperation.

10. **Ms. Rangaprasad** (Director, Policy and Advocacy, Financing for Development, Society for International Development), speaking also on behalf of the Civil Society Financing for Development Mechanism, said that the next step was to determine how and where to implement the many good ideas advanced during the discussions.

Panel discussion: "Building momentum for effective social protection measures"

11. **Ms. Esquivel Rodríguez** (Executive President, Costa Rican Social Security Fund), delivering a keynote address, said that her institution administered two insurance programmes of fundamental importance in any democracy: an illness and maternity insurance programme and a disability, old age and death insurance programme. Social security had long been recognized as necessary for social well-being, and development cooperation had a fundamental role to play in promoting and strengthening social security systems in the global South. Many developing countries depended largely on external assistance to implement effective social security programmes, and even middle-income countries like Costa Rica could have trouble maintaining the solvency of such programmes in the midst of demographic and economic changes.

12. Developed countries needed to increase ODA investment in social security and to provide technical assistance to strengthen local capacities, particularly with respect to data collection and analysis, which were essential for the design and implementation of effective social security policies. Close coordination and

collaboration among Governments, international organizations and civil society were also essential to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources and efforts, and social security systems must be adapted to accommodate changing social and economic conditions. By taking a comprehensive, collaborative approach and using all available tools and resources, it would be possible to ensure that developing countries had effective social security systems, with all of the benefits that implied.

13. The Costa Rican Social Security Fund worked collaboratively with communities to improve community health services by providing and soliciting information. It had recently participated in a World Health Organization (WHO) study involving the use of standardized colposcopy to screen for cervical cancer and was preparing to implement the protocol validated by the study, beginning in the most remote communities. In keeping with its emphasis on good management, the Fund contracted for the training of medical specialists, established working groups to address challenges and organized day events to address health needs efficiently, all with a clear commitment to the right to quality health care. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it had been able to achieve a high vaccination rate and keep mortality below the global average.

14. The countries of the global South should prioritize basic health care in order to prevent disease and avoid the high cost of treatment. In the long run, investing in education, promoting preventative health care and supporting local programmes could stretch limited resources.

15. Social protection and social security programmes had multiple benefits for social well-being, comprehensive human development and economic transformation; they were essential for sustainable development and social equity. Universal implementation would require international cooperation and collaboration, including cross-support between countries.

16. In closing, she urged the participants to reflect on the problem of corruption in social security systems, which sapped limited resources in the global South. Perhaps stiffer penalties would discourage corrupt practices.

17. **Ms. Andrees** (Special Representative to the United Nations and Director of the International Labour Organization Office for the United Nations), delivering a keynote address, said that extending social protection to the 4 billion people who had none would alleviate poverty, strengthen resilience and ensure more equal, just and cohesive societies. Many coverage and adequacy gaps were due to high levels of informality,

limited fiscal space and new challenges such as climate change, digital transformation and demographic shifts. The financing gap, which was largest in Africa, the Arab States, and Asia and the Pacific, had widened by approximately 30 per cent since the COVID-19 pandemic, owing to an increased need for health-care services and income security measures coupled with reductions in gross domestic product.

18. Investments in social protection should be rights-based, adequate, comprehensive and anchored in sound policy and legal frameworks. They should support good governance and administration, ensure coherence between tax and finance systems and improve social protection system resilience. Social protection should guarantee access to health care, ensure income security, protect jobs and enable people, including those in informal employment, to better navigate life and work transitions.

19. Through its flagship programmes, the International Labour Organization (ILO) provided technical support to countries around the world on social protection systems. It had spearheaded joint initiatives such as the Partnership for Global Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board. Within the United Nations system, 35 joint programmes prioritizing social protection benefits and services had been undertaken since 2019 with funding from the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund. Replicating and scaling up such programmes would require a significant and sustained increase in domestic and international resource allocations, as well as partnership with the international financial institutions to promote the creation of an adequate and sustainable fiscal space. Partnering with those institutions could also help to close the evidence gap. All projects should be undertaken in coordination with social partners and the ministries responsible not only for labour and social security, but also for finance and planning. The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions provided a strong platform for further concerted action.

20. **Mr. Bröning** (Executive Director, New York Office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung), moderator, said that the current food, energy and climate crises were exposing the often dangerous inadequacy of existing social protection measures. The panellists would present examples of effective social protection programmes and explore how social protection measures could be extended to respond to diverse risk needs.

21. **Mr. Buzu** (Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Republic of Moldova), panellist, said that

the social protection system in his country was under considerable pressure. With a population of only 2.5 million people, the Republic of Moldova had assisted and managed a flow of around half a million Ukrainian refugees in 2022. It had a child poverty rate of 24 per cent, a rapidly aging population and around 35 per cent inflation, fuelled by a tenfold increase in energy prices.

22. An effective social protection system required good data, investment, good management, strong institutions and integrity, all of which must be underpinned by political will, which in many cases was what was lacking. But at its core, social protection was about care and care work. In societies where care work was not valued, social protection systems were not effective. As a minister, his key challenge was to change the notion that care should be cheap or free. Social workers needed strong management and digital skills and sound legal knowledge, and they should be paid accordingly. He had hoped that after the COVID-19 pandemic, care workers would be more highly valued, but that was not the case. In fact, no one was even talking about the care crisis anymore. When a society could accept that many of the people who took care of its children, its sick and its vulnerable were paid little or nothing, it was a sign of moral bankruptcy. He hoped that one of the key outcomes of the panel discussion would be an appreciation of the value of care in the context of social protection and development cooperation.

23. **Ms. Gueye Diane** (Minister of Women, Family and Child Protection, Senegal), panellist, said that her delegation wished to express its deepest condolences to Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic for the tragic loss of life caused by the recent earthquake. The topic of the discussion was particularly relevant in view of the intersecting health, security, food, climate and economic crises, which had set back achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In the context of those crises, Senegal had made human capital and social protection a strategic axis of its 10-year development plan, with the promotion of social protection as the ninth strategic objective. Its national social protection strategy was based on a life-cycle approach that prioritized the expansion of social coverage, the inclusion of persons with disabilities and the protection of children.

24. With the goal of gradually extending social protection to all workers, Senegal had adopted a comprehensive national strategy to formalize the informal economy, in accordance with ILO recommendation No. 204, and it was currently implementing a simplified scheme for smaller taxpayers

with a view to bringing the informal sector into the national social protection system. In addition, it had begun enrolling domestic workers in a programme giving them access to health care, a family allowance, training and financing.

25. Twenty-three per cent of the Senegalese national budget was earmarked for education and training, with a particular emphasis on comprehensive early childhood development. Funding had also been set aside for a youth job creation programme and to finance and support women and youth entrepreneurs. In 2022, to protect household purchasing power, all public workers had received a substantial pay increase, and subsidies had been issued for fuel, natural gas and basic necessities. In addition, vulnerable families had received direct cash transfers, and the family security allowance had been increased and extended to many more families.

26. Substantial financing was required to respond adequately to ever-increasing, multifaceted crises. To meet that need, Senegal supported the establishment of a global social protection fund.

27. **Mr. Berro González** (Executive Director, Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation), panellist, said that, at the start of the COVID-19 crisis, the Uruguayan social protection system had acted quickly to ensure food security and increase transfers to vulnerable sectors, households and persons, with the support of the Resident Coordinator in Uruguay and the relevant United Nations agencies and funds. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2025 governed all cooperation, not only with the United Nations system but also with other countries and organizations. In the wake of the pandemic, the Government had launched educational reforms; it had succeeded in shrinking the informal sector, and its reform of the financially shaky pension and retirement system was currently before parliament. Uruguay had also modified the income tax system to benefit low-income workers and was working with ILO to improve employment and training opportunities. Various social protection measures had been strengthened with the support of United Nations agencies and the Inter-American Development Bank, and a parliamentary committee of experts had been established to study future challenges.

28. Uruguay was a high-income country, which limited its access to international cooperation, but it continued to require technical assistance and support for human resource training. The Government was pursuing multidimensional development in accordance with the 2030 Agenda. While Uruguay boasted one of the best

Gini coefficients in the region, as well as average digitalization and a decarbonization rate that exceeded the average of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), it also faced many challenges, including gender inequality, violence against women, one of the world's highest suicide rates, child poverty, education problems, low birth and immigration rates, and impediments to growth and investment.

29. A multidimensional mechanism was needed to measure development. Furthermore, while cooperation flows had increased, most countries still failed to meet their 0.7 per cent ODA commitment. Uruguay participated actively in South-South and triangular cooperation, with the understanding that they should not replace traditional cooperation. It was also involved in regional projects, where the participating countries were able to benefit from each other's expertise. Regardless of income level, the countries of Latin America shared similar problems. All countries had something to contribute to cooperation, and Uruguay stood ready to do its part.

30. **Ms. Hiam** (Deputy Director-General, Thailand International Cooperation Agency), panellist, said that strengthening social protection was a Thai development priority. Thailand took a people-centred approach to fostering human security in food, jobs, health, the environment and energy, embracing digital technology and applying its homegrown sufficient economy philosophy, which emphasized local wisdom and comprehensive human development. The sufficient economy philosophy had proved adaptable, affordable and effective in many partner countries. Thailand provided development cooperation for social protection both directly and in the context of triangular cooperation. It would continue to support the construction of effective social protection systems, which were key for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

31. **Ms. Narváez Ojeda** (Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations and Vice President of the Economic and Social Council), lead discussant, said that, in the current complex and uncertain environment, the most vulnerable were the first to suffer. Vulnerability varied dramatically from country to country and community to community, and the effects of a crisis were not gender-neutral. Women and girls generally suffered the most in economic crises and were the first to respond in a disaster.

32. Universal social protection systems acted as automatic stabilizers at the outset of a crisis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries had adapted their

social services systems to continue to serve their citizens, but progress in service delivery had decelerated in 2022, despite high need.

33. In 2020, her Government had launched the process of democratically drafting and adopting a new constitution that would enshrine a new social contract based on the conviction that social protections were needed to restore balance in a highly unequal society. Chile had played a leadership role in the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, and it was among the countries pushing for a new World Social Summit in 2025. The international community could not continue to address human security from a mostly military perspective and ignore the root causes of insecurity, which were related to a need for social protection.

34. **Mr. Santos Maraver** (Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations), lead discussant, said that multiple crises had driven an alarming rise in inequality, not only in wealth and income but also in security, justice and equity. According to the *Human Development Report 2021–2022* of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), six out of seven people worldwide felt insecure about many aspects of their lives, and the shared belief in progress on which the United Nations had been founded was crumbling. A new social contract that emphasized social redistribution mechanisms and public welfare systems was urgently required. Governments must go beyond conditional income programmes and wage-based benefits to squarely confront the challenges for achieving the universal human rights. That meant providing for housing and decent employment, improving education and public health systems and expanding social protection.

35. The new social contract must also be global. Spain heartily welcomed and supported the Secretary-General's proposed new common agenda, as well as the push for a new World Social Summit in 2025. The 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the General Assembly should produce a realistic analysis of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, and the proposed World Social Summit in 2025 would provide an opportunity to develop a new social contract for the twenty-first century.

36. Social protection and financing were two sides of the same coin. For the first time since Bretton Woods, States were seeking consensus on a new international financial framework that would create more fiscal space for developing countries and improve global fiscal management. The recently announced World Bank evolution process provided an opportunity to align the

multilateral development banks with the 2030 Agenda. The Resilience and Sustainability Facility of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the plans of the European Union and the United States were similarly encouraging. However, it was also necessary to increase development assistance.

37. Spain had already agreed to reassign 20 per cent of its special drawing rights, and it had recently passed a law requiring it to contribute 0.7 per cent of its gross national income to ODA. It had also joined with other Member States in submitting a draft General Assembly resolution entitled "Promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development" (A/77/L.60).

38. **Ms. Daway-Ducanes** (Assistant Secretary, National Economic and Development Authority, the Philippines), lead discussant, said that her country was working closely with its development partners to establish a robust social protection system. In that context, it had carried out studies to guide policy and programme design, developed a social protection index and conducted capacity-building workshops. It was continuing to implement a conditional cash transfer programme that had benefited more than 5 million households, and it had developed a road map to help at-risk rural populations prepare for, absorb and adapt to the impacts of shocks and disasters. However, increased investment was needed to expand the availability and accessibility of social protection to the most marginalized groups, as well as to improve data collection, disaggregation and monitoring. Technologically driven solutions could enhance the design and delivery of social programmes.

39. Strengthening social protection programmes would require greater investment and more innovation financing mechanisms, as well as stronger collaboration between United Nations agencies and programme countries, in order to improve coherency and alignment with national priorities. South-South and triangular cooperation allowed developing countries with comparable experiences to learn from each other and would continue to prove useful, particularly in the area of resilience-building.

40. The Philippines remained determined to eradicate poverty in all its forms and recognized the value of social protection programmes, particularly in the event of unforeseen challenges. Robust, accessible and comprehensive social protection programmes were vital for every country's post-pandemic economic recovery.

41. **Mr. Herman** (Observer for the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd), speaking also on behalf of the NGO Committee on Financing for Development, of which his organization was a member,

and the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, said that social protection was a human right. Adequate social protection programmes helped to ameliorate the inherent risks of daily life and allowed people to contribute more to society and lead lives of dignity. In many countries, Governments influenced by the rich and the companies they controlled were starving social protection of needed funds. Non-governmental organizations could not fill the gap. Donor Governments and international institutions should use their voices to strengthen the global call for adequate and universal social protection systems, helping to develop those systems when requested. Further policy and cultural reforms were also required. In that connection, the two organizations welcomed the new IMF policy on social spending, which encouraged engagement with United Nations agencies and the World Bank on social spending and recognized the value of civil society expertise. However, developing countries were still being pressured to cut social spending during austerity drives, and they received too little encouragement to expand social protection and the taxation it required.

42. **Mr. Meschchanov** (Observer for the Russian Federation) said that the COVID-19 pandemic and its socioeconomic consequences had created serious challenges for the global economy and social protection systems. Not only were health systems affected, but also hundreds of millions of people had lost their jobs and, according to estimates by the United Nations, some 60 per cent of employees were receiving lower pay than before the pandemic. Moreover, the annual funding deficit for social protection measures in developing countries stood at \$1.2 trillion, 60 per cent of countries were on the verge of a debt crisis and the shortfall in funding for the Sustainable Development Goals had reached \$4.3 trillion per year. Developing countries faced the brunt of the socioeconomic impact: OECD estimated that developed European economies would require three years to recover, whereas countries of the global South would need significantly more time and resources.

43. Development assistance represented targeted investment in global stability; it both strengthened international relations and helped to create a crisis-resistant international system. Russian assistance was geared towards resolving critical problems faced by partners, such as through the eradication of poverty and extreme poverty, and the stabilization of the socioeconomic situation. The Russian Federation prioritized assistance to countries most in need and had thus, as a humanitarian gesture, provided the poorest countries with supplies of food and agricultural products free of charge.

44. Since 2017, Russia had worked with the World Food Programme on various social sustainability projects, including school meals programmes in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Nicaragua, Cuba, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Sri Lanka. Those projects involved a mixture of humanitarian assistance and development assistance and thus had a very broad impact. The Russian Federation was also working with WHO to fund joint projects to help health systems to prevent and combat non-communicable diseases and had also spent some \$35 million on preventing the spread of COVID-19.

45. His Government was investing in human capital: in December 2017, as part of a joint fund with UNDP, it had established a funding window for projects promoting socioeconomic opportunities among young people. Since the Russian Federation attached great importance to making institutions more resilient to the impact of the pandemic, it contributed \$200,000 each year to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research for the organization of training courses for civil servants from countries in the Eurasian and other regions.

46. His delegation looked forward to continuing discussions on a new social contract at the proposed World Social Summit in 2025. It should be noted, however, that the national Constitution of each country would remain the main social contract.

47. **Mr. De Rezende Pinto** (Brazil) said that, thanks to a robust social protection system, his country had been able to lessen the impact of the current multiple crises. The well-established core system, which combined conditional cash transfers to families living in poverty and payments to older and disabled persons, was supplemented by initiatives to assist other vulnerable or at-risks groups and persons. All of those programmes were underpinned by a digitized social assistance system based on decentralized management and a comprehensive database of poor households and individuals.

48. To strengthen national efforts, development cooperation in social protection should be increased, and it should be pragmatic, holistic, people-centred and tailored to specific national circumstances and development needs. Brazil participated in a valuable example of triangular cooperation, the Social Protection Gateway, an online platform for policy dialogue and knowledge-sharing in the global South operated with the support of Australia and Germany.

49. **Mr. Murillo Ferrer** (Colombia) said that his Government had recently proposed labour, pension and health reforms. The labour reform was designed to

encourage open-ended employment contracts and overtime pay. The pension reform expanded pension coverage, instituted a solidarity tax to fund pensions and protected workers' savings from the market dynamics of private investment funds. The health reform would make health care a right, not a business, bring it to even the most rural areas and make it prevention-focused.

50. Even though the COVID-19 pandemic had shown that investment in social protection was critical to ensure resilience against external shocks, social spending was declining. The social sectors were linked to the protection of fundamental human rights and should not depend on the development of sufficiently attractive business models for their funding. It was also important to remove incentives for predatory behaviours such as corruption. To close such structural gaps, the development cooperation paradigm must be modernized by introducing concepts such as circular cooperation and development in transition, which were closely linked to the redefinition of the economic criteria used to measure development. Colombia welcomed the launch of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions and urged States to contribute to its funding.

51. **Mr. Veliz Rodríguez** (Observer for Panama) said that his country was committed to strengthening social protections as part of its coordinated effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Attaining those Goals required a committed international cooperation system that created synergies by facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences. International cooperation should support the populations hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and should provide innovative solutions for sustainable development.

52. During the pandemic, the Government had supplied emergency social assistance to vulnerable people, as well as a financial package for farmers. The recently established Ministry of Women would oversee the development of public policies to promote equal opportunity and women's empowerment, including through social protection programmes.

53. **Mr. Al-khalidi** (Observer for Iraq) said that alleviating poverty through social protection was a priority of his Government. Almost 2 million families received cash transfers through a social safety net programme. In addition, recent research had improved communications between the applicable ministries and vulnerable or remote populations and had resulted in a food distribution database of more than 1.5 million people. The Government was developing an economic and social survey of Iraqi families that would provide new data on poverty and social protection services. Its

new five-year poverty reduction strategy, also under development, would address the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Iraq was grateful to the United Nations programmes and agencies that continued to support it in its efforts to alleviate poverty.

54. **Mr. Buzu** (Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Republic of Moldova), in closing, said that all countries, developed and developing alike, could learn from each other. The bold fiscal policies adopted following the global financial crisis over a decade earlier should be pursued in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The continuation of ambitious social protection policies would aid the recovery, irrespective of inflation.

55. **Ms. Gueye Diane** (Minister of Women, Family and Child Protection, Senegal), in closing, said that while social protection measures were a reality in all countries to varying degrees, some of the mechanisms adopted in certain countries would certainly be useful models for others to follow. There remained an urgent need for social protection in order to protect the most vulnerable sectors of society, ensure development and improve socioeconomic resilience.

56. **Mr. Berro González** (Executive Director, Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation), in closing, said that social protection systems needed to be based on solid statistical data, which would not only ensure transparency but also help to focus policies on those areas where they were most needed.

57. **Ms. Hiam** (Deputy Director-General, Thailand International Cooperation Agency), in closing, said that no single country could address all of the world's problems, but by working together countries could seek to overcome global crises through smart international development cooperation.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.