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Chair: Mr. Yohanna (Vice-Chair) (Nigeria)

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*In the absence of Mr. Momen (Bangladesh),
Mr. Yohanna (Nigeria), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

General debate (continued)

1. **Mr. Bodini** (San Marino) said that Member States must allocate their resources in an efficient manner, and must focus on the increasing unemployment. A global strategy was needed in order to create new jobs, especially for the young.

2. In addition, efforts must be deployed to deleverage financial systems at every level for, given the high levels of consolidated debt, there was a possibility of sudden global inflation which, if not controlled, would wreak economic havoc. Finally, worldwide speculation in currencies, financial instruments and commodity prices must be controlled so that Governments could plan for the future in a more stable economic environment. The Committee was a forum in which a collective sense of duty could be generated with a view to overcoming the current economic and financial crisis.

3. **Ms. Agladze** (Georgia) said that her Government was determined to contribute to a successful outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio in 2012, and to the objectives of intelligent, inclusive and sustainable growth. The results of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (the Cancún Climate Change Conference) were welcome, however much remained to be done in order to prepare for the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (the Durban Climate Change Conference). For example, negotiations needed to be continued in order for the Cancún Agreement to be fully operationalized.

4. Georgia had already taken steps to combat climate change and introduce pathways to a green economy. For example, hydropower plants accounted for over 85 per cent of its electricity generation and it was committed to shifting to 100 per cent clean electricity consumption within the next few years. In

addition, carbon dioxide emissions were being reduced through various energy efficiency projects and the introduction of electric vehicles.

5. Her Government had focused on creating a favourable investment environment based on efficiency, transparency and the rule of law. As a result, Transparency International had named Georgia a leader in terms of public perception of the decrease in levels of corruption, and it was now ranked by the World Bank as one of the easiest places in the world to do business.

6. Georgia remained committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Great strides had been made in fighting poverty; providing education, employment and shelter; improving maternal and child health; reforming the pension system and expanding the social safety net for pensioners and other socially vulnerable groups. While the number of persons living below the poverty line had substantially decreased, much remained to be done in that regard.

7. **Mr. Kohona** (Sri Lanka) warned that soaring food and commodity prices, unpredictable fuel prices and the impacts of climate change might undermine the ability of developing countries to achieve the MDGs. Moreover, given that the recent natural disasters had posed serious challenges to agriculture in a range of countries and the international community must ask itself whether it was safe to depend on highly volatile financial markets to manage supply chains of essential foods and commodities. He took note of the Group of Twenty (G-20) action plan on food price volatility and agriculture, adding that Sri Lanka had successfully managed the food crisis and was on the path to self-sufficiency. The Government had made substantial investments in the agricultural industry and made sure that all farmers were provided with fertilizer.

8. Although it was necessary to curb carbon dioxide emissions, rather than imposing constraints upon the developing countries, it would be better to help them adopt more climate-friendly technologies and processes. Sri Lanka supported a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and urged delegations to pursue that goal at the Durban Climate Change Conference. Sri Lanka's biodiversity was exceptionally rich and, even though it was a relatively small and densely populated country, the Government had designated 22 per cent of the land to be

permanently under forest cover, to be expanded to 30 per cent in future.

9. Any action regarding the green economy should be based on the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation). Sri Lanka's commitment to the three fundamental pillars of sustainable development remained very strong, and it appealed to the international community to respect prior commitments, particularly by providing financial assistance, technology transfers and capacity-building. Once unfair trading systems, trade barriers and agricultural subsidies were eliminated, the economies of developing countries would undoubtedly expand, creating wealth for millions. Connecting rural economies more directly to the wider global economy would stimulate employment and private investment. After nearly three decades of conflict, Sri Lanka was on a path to rapid development. Access to electricity in rural areas and to drinking water had increased substantially and, in the past five years, per capita income had doubled.

10. **Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that excessive financial speculation and inadequate regulation of financial players had resulted in economic upheaval from which the poorest countries were suffering the most. His Government reiterated its call for an inclusive, transparent and democratic world economic order with functioning merit-based institutions that were focused on preserving the stability and prosperity of the world economy rather than on protecting the interests of the greedy few. In addition, the international exchange rate system should be reformed in order to correct imbalances.

11. The economic outlook was more uncertain than at any time since 2008; developed economies were contending with sovereign debt crises, stagnating growth, unemployment and social upheaval, while developing countries were vulnerable to external shocks, slowing growth and a worsening food crisis. Moreover, it was unclear how donor countries were going to be able to honour their pledges to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross national income to official development assistance (ODA) by the target year of 2015.

12. Sustainable development and the transfer of technologies from developed to developing countries

should be key priorities for the international community. To that end, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building should be fully implemented.

13. The preparatory process for the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development should focus on and give equal weight to the three pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social development and environmental protection. Climate change had worsened the impact of dust storms and sandstorms in the Persian Gulf region and had inflicted substantial socio-economic damage in the western half of his country. Technical support and the transfer of technology were needed in order to help countries prevent and respond to natural disasters.

14. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana), said that in a time of profound change and pervasive uncertainty there was an opportunity for more effective multilateralism; the Committee could contribute thereto by adopting more efficient and effective working methods. At the very time when global cooperation was vital, inertia and deadlock prevailed on the most critical issues. With fewer development resources available, it was becoming increasingly difficult to finance sustainable development in developing countries, and trade negotiations remained stalled. Small and vulnerable economies such as that of Guyana had been particularly hard hit by the current crises and their ability to achieve the MDGs was therefore undermined.

15. The famine in the Horn of Africa demanded a global response. Even though Guyana's resources were limited, it had contributed US\$ 100,000 to the United Nations relief operation in that region. The famine represented the worst manifestation of the food-security crisis presently affecting large parts of the globe and, despite improved production and supply, food prices remained at or near historic highs. The failure to take decisive international action was most evident in the international response to climate change. Guyana, for its part, had adopted a low-carbon development path to boost growth and develop sustainably. Advancing the goal of a "green economy" required the adoption of a new mindset and new instruments. The upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development marked an opportunity to place sustainable development on the development agenda for the years to come. Given the interdependency of the world, it was more important than ever to collaborate to reduce inequalities within

and between countries if the goals of sustainable development were to be fully achieved.

16. **Ms. Jusu** (Sierra Leone) expressed concern at the seeming lack of political will to implement internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and the systematic attempts to renegotiate those commitments, noting that multiple and interrelated global crises continued to undermine development efforts. In that regard she emphasized the indispensable role of ODA in promoting economic and social development, as well as poverty eradication, and called on countries to honour their commitment to double their ODA.

17. There was a great need to enhance efforts to mobilize adequate, high-quality technical support, and to promote the development and dissemination of appropriate, affordable and environmentally friendly and sustainable technologies, as well as their transfer to developing countries. In line with the Istanbul Programme of Action, her Government called for the implementation of targeted, predictable and sustainable productive capacity-building programmes.

18. Although the effects of climate change were already evident in Africa, the prospects of achieving a global agreement on reducing emissions remained dim. Yet developing countries must have access to affordable means of adapting to climate change. Noting that desertification posed serious challenges to economic growth, as was evident in the Horn of Africa, she called for enhanced implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as a global policy and monitoring framework for addressing issues of soil and land degradation.

19. In closing, she called on the developed countries to show flexibility and the political will necessary to resolve the impasse in the Doha Round of trade negotiations and she encouraged all of her country's development partners to promote foreign direct investment (FDI).

20. **Mr. Empole** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that the United Nations had an essential coordinating role to play in ensuring global and universal responses to the challenges currently facing the world. In view of the increased strain being placed on natural resources in order to meet the socio-economic needs of expanding populations, the Rio Conference on Sustainable Development offered a timely opportunity to assess the international community's common but differentiated

action to safeguard the future. Special attention should be given to the establishment of a green economy with a view to generating green jobs, eradicating poverty and achieving the MDGs, establishing an effective framework for sustainable development and putting in place flexible debt management mechanisms.

21. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, for its part, was already taking resolute action, in cooperation with its partners, to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation under the Bali Action Plan; it urged those partners that had not yet provided the promised financial support to make good on their pledges and contribute to the establishment of the necessary mitigation and adaptation programmes. Without effective international support, countries like his own could not achieve the MDGs; it was therefore important that States honour their international commitments, by transferring new, clean technologies, increasing official development assistance (ODA) and opening up markets, in accordance with the Doha Declaration. The adoption of a new partnership framework for the least developed countries was therefore to be welcomed, as was the renewed commitment of the G-20 countries to support the development of developing countries, particularly in areas serving to optimize growth potential and economic resilience. That positive approach would greatly gain if it were also guided by nationally determined development priorities and needs.

22. His Government was currently organizing the country's second free, democratic, transparent and credible general elections, thus testifying to good governance and the normal functioning of its institutions, due in significant measure to the contribution of the international community, particularly the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO). However, the Mission's role needed to be adjusted in the light of the changed realities on the ground; it should gradually move away from peacekeeping and focus more on supporting the country's economic recovery.

23. **Ms. Borges** (Timor-Leste) said that sustainable development was a key priority for all countries, developed and developing alike; all were labouring under the effects of the ongoing global crises. Challenges were particularly acute in the least developed countries, owing to their structural constraints and high vulnerability. To help those countries to achieve both sustainable development and the MDGs, there was an urgent need for Member States

to ensure the full, timely and effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action. Timor-Leste itself, while continuing to make steady progress towards some of the indicator targets, was not on track to meet the Goals by 2015.

24. Political will was a critical factor in achieving concrete results, and that must be borne in mind in the context of the forthcoming Conference on Climate Change in Durban. Climate change threatened the very existence of many small island countries, for rising sea levels was leading in turn to land degradation; in a country like Timor-Leste, where less than 19 per cent of the land was arable, that presented a serious threat to the food supply. Poverty could not be combated in such countries without efforts to ensure land quality and sustainability.

25. Regarding the forthcoming conference in Rio, she stressed that the role of women in sustainable development was critical, as their empowerment would not only lift millions out of extreme poverty but also have a huge impact on economic growth in developing countries. At a time of reduced availability of funding, investing in women was therefore the smart route.

26. **Mr. Sahakov** (Armenia) said that Armenia, while severely affected by the multiple crises in the world, remained committed to achieving the MDGs. His Government had continued to allocate increased resources to that end by reorienting public spending, establishing public-private partnerships and prioritizing the strengthening of social protection. In addition, in order to assist those most affected by the financial crisis, it was promoting agriculture, rural development and environmental sustainability.

27. It was important, however, for comprehensive reform to be undertaken at the international and national levels to ensure more inclusive participation of developing countries in global policy concerns. Reforms must be structural and their goal should be to strengthen the relationship between the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system. All aspects of international and regional cooperation needed to be enhanced, with the support of development partners, in particular through the exploration of innovative sources of financing.

28. **Mr. Ruiz** (Colombia) said that the global challenges to be addressed by the Committee in the current difficult economic climate called for inclusive solutions and international solidarity. A sustainable increase in

economic growth in the interests of poverty alleviation worldwide required investment in science, technology and innovation, making it vitally important to strengthen North-South and South-South cooperation programmes. Measures must also be taken to strengthen coherence and coordination of United Nations operational and field activities, particularly through joint programming by different agencies, so as to guard against duplication. Such an approach would make for more wide-ranging strategies, more lasting solutions and more effective flows of humanitarian assistance to countries in need.

29. Colombia had drawn valuable lessons from its own efforts to achieve democracy, prosperity and sustainable development and wished to share them with other countries and with the United Nations system. Enhanced South-South cooperation would make that possible, while at the same time giving a boost to development assistance. International development efforts continued to be of key importance, particularly in combating poverty; Colombia remained committed to those efforts and was currently preparing its contribution to the Rio Conference on Sustainable Development. One of the chief results of that Conference should be the establishment of a set of sustainable development goals based on Agenda 21 that would reflect and tie in with the MDGs.

30. **Mr. Phommachanh** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the multiple challenges facing the world were not only obstructing the efforts of developing countries to achieve their development goals but were also setting them back even further. Concerted action was therefore needed to address those challenges, taking into account realities on the ground as well as the critical needs and priorities of individual countries and in line with the commitments made by the international community. Cooperation within the United Nations system needed to be further strengthened and, in view of the continuing uncertainty of economic recovery, reform of the global financial system and architecture must be stepped up.

31. At the same time, and against the backdrop of the upcoming Rio and Durban conferences, concrete and practical measures should be developed to address the adverse effects of climate change and promote sustainable development. Moreover, in view of the special needs of landlocked developing countries and least developed countries, the international community should provide

increased support for the necessary structural changes in those countries.

32. The Lao People's Democratic Republic, for its part, had gone some way towards meeting its own daunting challenges by developing road transport networks and regional connectivity. It had incorporated the goals of the Almaty and Istanbul Programmes of Action into its own seventh Five-Year Plan with a view to transforming the country into an industrialized and modern nation and ultimately emerging from its least-developed status by 2020. That would not be possible without the international community's enhanced support for its national development efforts.

33. **Mr. Lakhal** (Tunisia) said that the people of Tunisia, driven by their aspirations to liberty, dignity and social justice, had risen up on 14 January 2011 to put an end to decades of dictatorship and injustice. With less than a month remaining before the first credible, transparent and free elections in the country's history to designate a Constituent Assembly, the success of democracy required, first and foremost, foreign direct investment (FDI), improved access to export markets, greater mobility for domestic expertise and the urgent implementation of existing pledges of cooperation, including those made under the Deauville Partnership. In particular, his delegation urged the international community to support the national strategy known as the "Jasmine Economic and Social Plan", as well as to provide assistance in repatriating assets stolen by the previous regime. The success of Tunisia's efforts would have favourable repercussions throughout North Africa, the Middle East and the Mediterranean area.

34. Despite the country's enormous potential in the transitional period, progress was threatened by chronic unemployment, especially among young graduates. Out of a labour force of 3.9 million, 700,000 were without work, including 180,000 degree holders. Youth unemployment, which was a major threat to world security and stability, had been one of the issues accorded special consideration during the recent High-level Meeting on Youth; the participants' call for the elaboration of an international strategy to address it should be taken up by the Committee.

35. Desertification, soil degradation and drought were also serious concerns. The food crisis in the Horn of Africa was above all a moral crisis which had no place in a world characterized by a divide between rich societies, where overabundance could even be a source

of pathology, and poor countries afflicted by endemic hunger. The international community should take urgent action to eliminate that contradiction by supporting the work of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and by bringing the Doha Round negotiations to a rapid conclusion. The international community should also take steps to end the economic embargo imposed on Arab peoples living under foreign occupation by urging the occupying Power to halt its illegal exploitation of those peoples' natural resources.

36. With less than four years remaining until the date set for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), success was within reach on several fronts, including a reduction of the global poverty rate to less than 15 per cent, and access to drinking water for more than 90 per cent of the world's population. But a great deal of work remained to be done, notably with respect to maternal health and infant mortality. To that end, his delegation called on donor countries to honour their pledges to devote 0.7 per cent of their gross national income (GNI) to developing nations.

37. **Mr. Touré** (Guinea) said that the new Government of his country had inherited a disastrous socio-economic situation characterized by poor governance and corruption on every front, compounded by an unsustainable debt burden and a drastic decline in ODA due to the severing of relations with international financial institutions. It was therefore seeking to put in place a political and institutional framework for the rebirth of Guinea.

38. Among the efforts being made to improve the living conditions of the population, special attention was being given to agriculture, with a view to achieving food self-sufficiency. The mining sector was being restored as a pillar of the country's economic growth through the adoption of a new mining code which catered to the interests both of Guinea and of its partners. Measures were also being taken to modernize and restructure the judicial system in order to promote and protect citizens' rights and freedoms and encourage investments.

39. The main aims of the ongoing reform were to halt inflation, prevent the embezzlement of public funds, avoid recourse to the injection of money into the financial system and fight corruption and impunity. Talks were under way with the Bretton Woods institutions aimed at wiping out Guinea's debt and thereby making substantial financial resources

available for sustainable development. Health care, education and environmental protection were among the Government's priorities, and special attention was being given to the needs of the most vulnerable groups, notably women and young people.

40. However, those efforts would not be able to bear fruit without the constant and effective support of the international community. His delegation therefore called on the donor community to provide financial assistance to Guinea in the current crucial phase of its history.

41. **Mr. AlHantouli** (Observer for Palestine) said that the challenges confronting the pillars of sustainable development continued to persist and even intensify in some cases. Most developing countries continued to face serious problems, including high unemployment, poverty, food insecurity, the negative effects of climate change, the burden of foreign debt and the lack of external financial assistance. The situation required all States, especially developed countries, to address those challenges in an integrated, coordinated and balanced manner.

42. It was time the international community shouldered its responsibilities by paying the necessary attention to the dire situation of the Palestinian people. Based on their common responsibility to protect the right of all peoples to development, Member States should confront and put an end to the illegal policies and practices imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinians. Those practices included the confiscation of land, natural resources and private property, the demolition of homes and businesses, the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements and the illegal Israeli blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip. Those policies and practices not only violated international humanitarian law and a number of resolutions of the United Nations, but undermined the viability and sustainable development capacity of the Palestinian Territory.

43. Recalling that, at the recent meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, reports submitted by the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had affirmed that the Israeli occupation was the main obstacle to Palestine's development, he said that Member States must take all necessary measures, including legal procedures as required, to stop economic support for the occupation and compel Israel to respect its obligations under international law. On 23 September

2011, as part of the exercise of the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination, Palestine had submitted its application for admission as a Member of the United Nations and had pledged its commitment to the obligations stemming from the Charter.

44. **Ms. Brennen-Haylock** (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Liaison Office with the United Nations), said that, with undernourishment higher than it had been before the economic crisis, it was becoming more difficult than ever to achieve the MDGs. The situation was especially worrisome in developing countries, where most of the world's population growth was occurring. Urgent action was needed to address the structural causes of food insecurity and malnutrition, which were directly related to the decline in agricultural investment, to insecurity of land tenure and access to natural resources, as well as to inadequate attention to women's vulnerability to malnutrition. Women played an important role in the agricultural sector and were vital to the eradication of hunger and poverty.

45. Noting that the impact of climate change on agricultural production would increase the risks of food insecurity, she said that production targets must be achieved while preserving the natural resource base. Moreover, food price volatility worsened the food insecurity of vulnerable populations and, as had been seen during the 2008-2009 crisis, could contribute to civil unrest and political instability.

46. It was opportune that the theme for World Food Day 2011 would be "Food prices — from crisis to stability", as it would be an opportunity to reiterate the message that investing in agriculture for food security would contribute significantly to the well-being of people everywhere, especially the poor. In closing, she noted said that FAO stood ready to work with Member States towards the proclamation of 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming and of 2013 as the International Year of Quinoa.

47. **Ms. Stewart** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the increased reorientation of macroeconomic policy goals in favour of employment and social development was encouraging given that 200 million people were out of work worldwide; 39 per cent of workers living with their families were below the poverty line; and 80 per cent of people had no access to social security. The financial and economic crisis had highlighted the importance of filling the social security gap in order for countries to cope better

with the human dimension of the continuing turmoil. The ILO Social Protection Floor served in that regard not only as a tool for equitable growth, but also as a means of empowering people to seize market opportunities and helping to stabilize aggregate demand. She called on the Committee to give due attention to those interrelated issues in its discussions.

48. Synergies needed to be developed between economic, social and environmental policies on a scale that would produce a practical impact. The Rio Conference on Sustainable Development would offer an opportunity not only to review progress but also to consolidate development gains, including through job creation. The ILO Global Jobs Pact continued to provide countries with a realistic set of adaptable policy measures to address employment constraints and many of them had successfully applied them. As a result and also through global cooperation, job-rich growth had been boosted in the past two years; however, those efforts must be redoubled, while continuing to be supported at the national level.

49. **Mr. Batjargal** (World Meteorological Organization (WMO)) said that whereas at the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the environmental and economic pillars of sustainable development had been considered by many to be in conflict, policymakers now regarded the two as complementary issues in the context of climate change, disaster risk reduction and water resource issues.

50. As a specialized agency dealing with weather, climate and water, WMO coordinated several programmes addressing global concerns. The World Weather Watch (WWW), which was the backbone of all WMO programmes, coordinated global meteorological observation and data dissemination systems in accordance with the principle of the free and unrestricted exchange of information.

51. The work of WMO was vital because many developing countries lacked the resources to generate the weather information needed to assist farmers and to guarantee the safety of aviation and marine transport. Currently about 70 developing nations lacked climate information, and there was concern that the potential commercialization of climate information services could impact access to critical weather data by poorer countries.

52. In keeping with its commitment to ensure timely access to climate information for all, WMO was

partnering with other United Nations agencies to establish a global framework for climate services. As countries faced growing adaptation challenges due to climate change, climate knowledge needed to be more broadly disseminated to farmers, city planners and industry developers, with the greatest emphasis on the provision of adequate support to the most vulnerable, in the interest of all.

53. **Ms. Oosterhof** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that the current drought in the Horn of Africa underscored the need to address long-term and chronic issues in the region simultaneously. While the crisis in that region was the result of a complex interplay of factors, existing vulnerabilities would increasingly be exacerbated by climate change. It was therefore imperative for the international community to honour its commitment to the effective promotion of adaptation measures under the Cancun Adaptation Framework.

54. Moreover, in order to reduce world hunger by 2015, sustainable, climate-proof food production must be enhanced and the most vulnerable should have greater access to adequate food. The 2011 IFRC World Disasters Report recognized that the issues of global food security, hunger and malnutrition lay at the heart of virtually all the international community's current concerns.

55. National systems and institutions needed to have a central role in planning and implementing development activities. If assistance was timely and well coordinated and directed towards sustainable solutions, fewer people would suffer. Reduced vulnerability and enhanced in-country capacity were the keys to sustained development. Moreover, by helping to reduce socio-economic vulnerabilities, disaster risk reduction and preparedness could make a crucial cross-cutting contribution to development.

56. She concluded by calling on development partners to use the opportunity offered by the upcoming Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Bhutan to review progress in implementing forward-looking development strategies and to move towards meeting international commitments by building up local capacities and systematically addressing inequality and discrimination in order to achieve sustainable development.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.