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Chair: Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia)

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

Agenda item 23: Eradication of poverty and other development issues

(a) Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008–2017) (A/72/283)

(b) Women in development (A/72/282)

(c) Human resources development (A/72/292)

1. **Ms. Puri** (Assistant Secretary-General for intergovernmental support and strategic partnerships, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on women in development (A/72/282), said that at its sixtieth session, the Commission on the Status of Women had set out a road map for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which would require scaled-up efforts by Member States and other stakeholders in order to fully integrate gender equality strategies into national sustainable development frameworks. In that regard, the Committee should support Governments in mainstreaming gender into all sustainable development efforts.

2. Approximately 60 per cent of the nearly 800 million persons in extreme poverty around the world were women. To improve that situation, it was necessary to change the conditions for women at work; accordingly, at its sixty-first session, the Commission on the Status of Women had produced an action plan for women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. Since an estimated 600 million new jobs would need to be created by 2030 just to keep pace with the growth of the global working-age population, and since many of those jobs would entail working with new technology, it was essential to focus not only on young women's entry into the labour market, but also on providing them with marketable skills in the areas of science, technology and innovation.

3. Gender-responsive investments in water and sanitation, safe transport and sustainable energy could strengthen women's access to markets and decent work, help reduce the proportion of women's work that was unpaid and enhance women's mobility in carrying out a range of activities. Gender-responsive strategies on mitigation and adaptation to climate change could strengthen women's economic empowerment; in that regard, she welcomed the Gender Action Plan that had been adopted in September 2017 by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing

Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, which was expected to benefit women and girls at the community level and contribute to achievement of the target on land-degradation neutrality under Goal 15 of the 2030 Agenda.

4. The report focused on enhancing women's capacity as agents of change in national development and poverty eradication. Emphasis was placed on policies that accelerated the transition of women from informal to formal employment, including access to decent work opportunities and social protection. Globally, women performed over 75 per cent of unpaid domestic and care work, which underpinned the productive economy.

5. The report offered recommendations concerning four major areas in which work was needed to accelerate the transition of women from informal employment into more productive employment and decent work. First, legal, regulatory and labour market reforms were needed. Such reforms had a significant impact; for instance, following the ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization, a growing number of countries were extending labour and social protection to domestic workers, which affected women disproportionately. Collective bargaining rights and women workers' organizations were also critical for addressing low pay, boosting worker productivity and promoting a safe working environment — the latter of particular importance for women and girls in view of the disproportionate amount of workplace violence and harassment to which they were subjected. Second, social protection, a key feature of decent work, was needed, as women were over-represented among those who lacked social protection. Third, since women's double responsibility for paid and unpaid work substantially limited their participation in the social, political and economic spheres, investment was required in quality care services; measures such as care leave policies, care insurance schemes and flexible workplace practices were steps in the right direction. Lastly, sustainable job creation was needed. Productive opportunities for women could be expanded through investment in labour-absorbing sectors and promotion of industrial growth policies that supported high-productivity and labour-intensive economic activities, as well as investment in emerging areas, such as the green economy.

6. **Ms. Bas** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008–2017)"

(A/72/283), said that since 1990, about 1 billion people had been lifted out of extreme poverty, but many challenges remained; Africa and the least developed countries faced persistent problems and progress had been uneven across and within regions. The report included a set of recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly designed to maintain the momentum of the Decade in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

7. Since growth had not been sufficient to absorb the swelling labour force, countries must focus on generating employment. In 20 years the majority of the global population would be above age 60; it was critical to work out how to absorb those older persons in order to avoid new forms of poverty. Significant progress had been made in reducing the prevalence of undernourishment, while lack of access to education remained widespread.

8. Lessons learned from the Decade included the importance of social policy, including social protection; forward-looking macroeconomic policies; investment in agriculture, rural development and infrastructure; and policies to build resilience that empowered people living in poverty. It was vital to ensure that people living in rural areas were prosperous, not least because they were responsible for producing most of the food needed for the growing numbers of urban inhabitants.

9. In order to evaluate the impact of the Decade, her Division had circulated a survey containing questions on legislation, policies and programmes for poverty eradication at the national level. The responses revealed some key areas that would require further work over the next 13 years if poverty was to be eradicated by 2030. The survey showed that countries were committed to eradicating extreme poverty, with 44 of the 50 respondent countries having established national poverty eradication strategies. Despite progress in several areas, countries had identified challenges to their implementation of poverty eradication programmes, which included the need for greater budgetary resources and policy development capacity, together with strengthened interministerial and interdepartmental coordination.

10. Priorities included the need for structural transformation driven by sustainable and inclusive industrialization, integrated poverty eradication policies to address inequality, decent work, investment in quality education and health care, and improvements to the terms and conditions of women's participation in the labour market. The private sector, civil society organizations and the United Nations system must continue to support poverty eradication efforts.

11. **Mr. Hanif** (Director, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Human resources development for the twenty-first century" (A/72/292), said that human resources development was fundamental to fulfilling the commitment to leave no one behind. The world of work was changing significantly everywhere, but there was the potential to shape its course.

12. The report underscored the importance of enabling all individuals to effectively navigate the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century. Decreasing employment in some sectors, wage stagnation and income inequality, compounded by a prevalence of vulnerable employment in many developing countries, as well as rapid advances in science, technology and innovation, combined to create a challenging new world of work. The organization of work and production was changing as the result of globalization, and the future of work would be shaped by the global demographic situation.

13. Education, training and skills development were vital, and would need to be adapted to current and anticipated changes in the world of work, which, broadly speaking, meant that education and training systems must continue to improve. National institutions must also be adapted, especially those operating in the fields of education, training and social protection; and human resources development should be incorporated into national sustainable development strategies. While there was no one-size-fits-all approach, long-term investment in certain universally valuable areas would contribute to human resource development: those included inclusive and equitable quality education, lifelong learning opportunities, early childhood education, interdisciplinary approaches in the higher education sector, better connections between education and employment, and strengthened social protection systems and labour standards.

14. Technological advances had enabled the United Nations system to deliver integrated policy advice to support countries' implementation of the 2030 Agenda in innovative ways, particularly through effective knowledge management systems. At the same time, those advances were reshaping United Nations policy research, and the normative agenda of the Organization. The United Nations would support human resources development for the twenty-first century — which would require investments in its own workforce that would enable it to better support Member States.

15. **Mr. Morejón Pazmiño** (Ecuador) said that the reports which had been introduced provided interesting

insights into efforts to address inequality, which was inexorably linked to extreme poverty. Ecuador was prioritizing the fight against inequality at the regional level and was working to develop synergies with the relevant work of the United Nations.

16. **Ms. Edison** (Nigeria) said that the report on the second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty made it clear that people would continue to move from rural to urban areas; that was certainly the trend in Africa, where most development was happening in urban centres. She asked what kinds of policies could be prescribed for countries such as Nigeria to ensure that those living in rural areas were not left behind.

17. **Ms. Bas** (Director, Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that structural transformation was needed. Urban and rural areas must function in an integrated manner, and new kinds of rural work must be created. Her Division was currently engaged in discussions with a large private company and a group of cooperatives concerning a farming project; they intended to hold an event called “Farmers of tomorrow”, at which older generations could teach new generations the beauty of being a farmer, but that would also focus on innovative farming techniques compatible with respect for the environment and human dignity. Utilization of new methods would be critical to rural livelihoods.

18. **Ms. Puri** (Assistant Secretary-General for intergovernmental support and strategic partnerships, UN-Women) said that, at its sixty-second session, the Commission on the Status of Women would focus on women’s empowerment in the context of rural development, which had a major role to play in addressing poverty and inequality, and in bridging the rural/urban divide that existed in many developing countries. Creating infrastructure in rural areas was essential; electrification, education, transport, financial infrastructure and telecommunications were all critical for levelling the playing field.

19. Sustainable agriculture should support poverty eradication by increasing incomes and creating jobs; in that connection, it was necessary to re-examine the future of agricultural jobs, with a view to encouraging young people to stay in rural areas, for the benefit of those areas, particularly since the unplanned growth of urban areas presented a major challenge in developing countries. It was necessary to determine how technology could best be used to accelerate rural development. In short, the whole interlinked picture — rural development, its connection to urban development, and redressing inequalities, including gender inequality — must be addressed holistically.

20. **The Chair** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the item.

21. **Mr. Morejón Pazmiño** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, with reference to the report of the Secretary-General on the second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008–2017), it was worrying that the strong economic performance of African countries over the past two decades had not translated into a significant reduction of poverty or the creation of a sufficient number of jobs. The global number of unemployed was predicted to rise to 203.8 million in 2018, a figure particularly concerning for the Group of 77 and China because more than 70 per cent of the unemployed were expected to be citizens of those countries. The Group of 77 and China stressed the link between poverty and inequality; in view of the continuing gulf between rich and poor countries, rising income inequality in most countries, and disparities in access to education, health care, productive assets and finance, addressing inequality must be an integral part of any poverty eradication strategy.

22. The Group of 77 and China shared the view that the second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty had contributed to progress towards poverty eradication, and hoped that the third Decade would help improve the efficiency and coordination of efforts. It called for the creation of more opportunities for people living in poverty, the mobilization of significant resources, and adequate and predictable financing that would enable developing countries to implement poverty eradication policies and programmes.

23. It was worrying that progress on women’s and girls’ empowerment was uneven across the world, and that women and girls were affected disproportionately by climate change and natural disasters. Violence against women and girls continued to be an obstacle to gender equality. More measures were needed to counter all forms of gender-based violence, particularly femicide. In view of the vital economic contribution made by women, their empowerment was a critical component of poverty eradication.

24. Human resource development, particularly in the areas of health and education, was central to economic, social and environmental development. It was vital to the efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and to expand opportunities, in particular for the most vulnerable population groups, as well as being of critical importance in dealing with current global challenges, the pace of technological change and evolving employment models. The Group of 77 and China hoped that development partners would take all

those factors into account during the upcoming informal consultations.

25. **Mr. Tuy** (Cambodia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN was committed to eradicating poverty through integrated, cross-sectoral approaches to the development gap, rural development, community empowerment, stakeholder engagement and private-sector development partnerships. Successful implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration over the past decade had dramatically reduced poverty in the region, as well as facilitating trade and investment and reducing development gaps between member States. ASEAN had also implemented a series of Framework Action Plans for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication, designed to support rural development and narrow the development gaps in the region.

26. Poverty eradication required global action; the low level of official development assistance (ODA) was therefore a matter of concern. Internationally agreed ODA commitments must be met; debt relief would also help developing countries to eradicate poverty; and international cooperation on financing, innovation and technology transfer would support their achievement of sustainable development. Developed countries should open more markets for products of interest to developing countries, eliminate subsidies and refrain from protectionism in order to ensure favourable conditions for global trade.

27. ASEAN reaffirmed its commitment to the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations (2016–2020), the 2030 Agenda and the fourth ASEAN Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication.

28. **Ms. Young** (Belize), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the 2030 Agenda was based on the understanding that poverty was multidimensional, that economic growth and income accretion were insufficient for lifting and keeping people out of poverty, and that measures must be taken to address the causes of vulnerability and deprivation and to strengthen adaptive capacities. The Caribbean countries faced a unique challenge amongst developing countries because low income levels and growing multidimensional poverty existed alongside persistent low growth and the erosion of human development gains, difficulties that were compounded by the region's vulnerability to exogenous economic/financial and environmental shocks.

29. The recent hurricanes that had hit Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica had thrown into sharp relief the interconnected vulnerabilities of the State and the individual. In Dominica and Barbuda entire communities were homeless and lacking the basic necessities for survival; fishermen had lost their boats and gear and farmers had lost their crops; and, with agriculture and tourism devastated, those countries' economies were at a halt. The costs of rebuilding would be prohibitive: domestic resources alone would be insufficient. Nevertheless, the Governments of those countries had reaffirmed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda.

30. The United Nations must ensure that global policies reflected a multidimensional perspective on poverty and the integrated approach to sustainable development that was called for in the 2030 Agenda. Accordingly, it should ensure that more suitable metrics were developed to measure progress; the current reliance on per capita income as the determinant of development and thus of access to finance meant that all the CARICOM countries, with the exception of Haiti, had to borrow on market terms; Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda, classified as upper-middle-income and high-income respectively, would therefore have to borrow on non-concessional terms in order to rebuild.

31. Despite widespread recognition that small island developing States comprised a special category with regard to sustainable development — due to their vulnerability to climate change and related disasters, the slow growth of their economies, and their limited resources to build resilience — international cooperation and support mechanisms did not reflect their vulnerability. The United Nations must champion customized approaches for small island developing States that would ensure financing to reverse the damage they had already suffered so that they could make progress towards sustainable development.

32. Lastly, the United Nations should urge development partners to guard against harmful consequences of their domestic policies, a case in point being the impact of foreign de-risking measures. De-risking measures had resulted in the reduction of correspondent banking relationships with banks in the Caribbean, on which Caribbean economies were highly dependent, resulting in reduced international trade, remittances and investment flows for Caribbean States, and severely hindering their ability to fulfil their responsibilities for the development of their countries.

33. **Mr. Ahsan** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the least developed countries, said that despite significant progress in reducing poverty over the course

of the second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, at the current rate of growth, nearly 35 per cent of the population in the least developed countries would remain in extreme poverty in 2030, meaning that major changes were needed to accelerate poverty reduction.

34. First, the least developed countries needed to redouble their efforts to overcome structural impediments and enhance productive capacity. They must pursue inclusive development by extending social safety nets, and ensure greater participation by women and young people in their poverty eradication efforts. Second, increased investment was needed in agriculture and industry: the least developed countries were heavily reliant on agriculture, and, despite their industrial potential, the share of manufacturing in their gross domestic products was not growing steadily enough. Investment in infrastructure, energy, information and communications technology (ICT), and skill development was likewise needed. Access to food, nutrition and social services must be improved. Third, private sector development was crucial, which meant ensuring inclusive access to finance — a core component of financial and private sector development. Fourth, reinvigorated global support was needed to help the least developed countries to overcome their structural challenges. International cooperation was required to mobilize both domestic and international resources. Development partners must fulfil their commitments related to ODA, trade, foreign direct investment and other forms of development finance, as well as cooperating to address illicit financial flows, tax evasion and transfer mispricing. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development must be fully implemented.

35. Fifth, in view of the importance of access to technology for poverty eradication, development partners were urged to contribute generously to the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries. Sixth, the United Nations development system should prioritize the least developed countries in its allocation of funding, in line with the mandate given to it in General Assembly resolution [71/243](#). Finally, additional and predictable support from the international community was needed to help the least developed countries to address the severe impacts of climate change and related disasters. The Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 must be implemented. The Secretary-General's recommendations concerning the establishment of a crisis-mitigation and resilience-

building mechanism for the least developed countries was welcome.

36. **Ms. Zahir** (Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that AOSIS hoped that future reports of the Secretary-General under the current agenda item would be more action-oriented and analytical. Increasingly frequent and intense natural disasters and other extreme weather and environmental events, combined with the effects of the 2007–2009 financial and economic crises, were reversing the sustainable development gains made by small island developing States and increasing their indebtedness. Those countries struggled to diversify their economies due to their remoteness, highly dispersed populations, limited growth and high import costs. AOSIS States frequently relied on tourism, agriculture and fisheries — all unstable sources of revenue because of climate change. They were trapped in an increasingly harmful vicious cycle, whereby already limited resources were used for rebuilding, rather than moving ahead with sustainable development. The high proportion of young people in the AOSIS States put pressure on employment opportunities, which were further limited when businesses were forced to close in the aftermath of disasters.

37. Powerful storms were becoming more frequent, and along with other climate-related events including tsunamis and sea-level rise, they were pushing many small island developing States towards sustained poverty. AOSIS States also had to contend with illicit financial flows, unfair trade practices, taxation challenges and a lack of realistic criteria for development financing — the per capita gross domestic product (GDP) criterion meant that they did not qualify for many concessional financing opportunities. Although statistics showed that most small island developing States were experiencing relatively high economic growth rates, much of that growth was volatile, and was not leading to sustainable job creation; instead, it was being driven by the export of a limited number of commodities and low value-added products.

38. Due to the interrelated and overlapping challenges they faced, small island developing States were deeply in debt. They remained committed to gender equality, but gains in that area were lost when external shocks and crises or natural disasters struck. As the States that suffered the most, yet contributed the least, to climate change, the AOSIS States implored Member States to meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement, and called on those which had not yet done so to ratify or accede to it; urged international financial institutions to consider standards for concessional financing that went beyond per capita income; urged the Secretary-General,

in his organizational reform, to ensure that United Nations entities took account of the needs and priorities of small island developing States as outlined in the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway); and called on all partners to meet their ODA commitments and work with national Governments to ensure funding for nationally determined priorities.

39. **Mr. Jaime Calderón** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that sustainable development must be addressed in a holistic way; piecemeal approaches to poverty diagnosis and reduction and the prioritization of certain aspects of development at the expense of others distorted the real situation of his region.

40. Recognizing that despite progress, food insecurity and hunger continued to be challenges for countries in the region, CELAC member States reiterated their commitment to their regional zero hunger goal, and affirmed that they would continue to strengthen the CELAC Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication 2025. CELAC recognized the importance of public policies focused on social protection and employment, among other issues, for the regional eradication of hunger and poverty. Dialogue and political agreement based on trust and respect for countries' differences were indispensable for advancing the political, economic, social and cultural integration of the Community and for formulating shared solutions to promote and maintain peace and sustainable development.

41. In line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, developed partners must ensure that middle-income countries' diverse and specific development needs were addressed, recognize the importance of ODA and other concessional finance and devise methodologies that would better address middle-income countries' realities. It was vital to ensure coordination and coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework in order to build synergies and resilience and support the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions. CELAC reaffirmed the need to improve the regulation, supervision and control of international and regional financial systems in order to create an international financial environment conducive to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and emphasized that the mobilization of national resources was not enough to achieve the necessary growth.

42. CELAC highlighted the positive impact on food and nutrition security of facilitating and increasing

intraregional trade. It also recognized the role of South-South and triangular cooperation, complementary to North-South cooperation, and ODA, in strengthening food and nutrition security and supporting the exchange of good practices on adaptation to climate change and access to sustainable energy. CELAC remained committed to gender equity and equality and the advancement of women, which must be incorporated into national policies and strategies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Gender equality must continue to inform the debate on development; structural gender inequalities that perpetuated poverty and marginalization must be eliminated. The 2030 Agenda must be implemented in a people-centred way, underpinned by respect for human rights, and with a cross-cutting gender perspective. Global structural changes were needed to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality.

43. **Ms. Gil** (Israel) said that the approach to poverty eradication must be multidimensional, and must address the underlying causes. Capacity-building, and not solely aid, was needed to eradicate poverty. Developing countries faced many of the same challenges Israel had struggled to overcome during its early years; her Government was therefore eager to share its know-how and limited resources with other countries. As a country facing a severe water shortage itself, Israel was proud to provide technology and training to nations facing desertification, water scarcity and water salination. Israeli scientists and engineers were constructing eco-friendly desalination plants and had developed new methods for reclaiming water; Israel currently reused 85 per cent of the water it consumed, mainly for agricultural purposes. Her Government worked with Governments, civil society, academia and the private sector to develop innovative solutions, including in the areas of agriculture, efficient irrigation systems, post-harvest treatment and seeds.

44. Recognizing that education and an expanded workforce were essential for robust and sustainable development, Israel offered courses to instructors from developing nations. Women's and young people's participation in the workforce was a prerequisite to poverty eradication. As the world united to face the immense challenges and exciting opportunities presented by the 2030 Agenda, it was the collective duty of Member States to share knowledge, teach best practices and inspire future generations to meet challenges and expand horizons.

45. **Mr. Lu Yuhui** (China) said that the international community should forge consensus and make every effort to promote a community of shared destiny and improve the well-being of all of humanity. First, the pace of global poverty eradication needed to be

accelerated so that the number of people living on an income of less than \$1.25 per day could be reduced to zero by 2030. In order to fulfil that promise, collectively made by the international community, developed countries should increase their assistance to developing countries, which in turn should work domestically to increase their momentum for development.

46. Second, new forms of international cooperation should be developed in order to strengthen the goal of eradicating poverty. Countries should support the key role of the United Nations and the World Bank, work to optimize global development partnerships, advance North-South cooperation, strengthen South-South cooperation, and supply ample resources and impetus in order to achieve that goal.

47. Third, great efforts should be made to promote diverse and self-directed sustainable development. Developed countries in particular should support developing countries in their efforts and promote expanded, higher-quality regional cooperation in such areas as industry, agriculture, human resource development, clean energy and environmental protection so as to help developing countries turn their resource advantages into development advantages.

48. Fourth, an open global economy and an economic and financial system that was fair, equitable, inclusive and orderly should be preserved and further developed, creating a positive external environment for developing countries. Those countries should be supported in infrastructure development and capacity-building so that they could better integrate into the global supply, industrial and value chains and thus accelerate poverty reduction.

49. China had been a consistent advocate of global poverty eradication over more than 30 years of reform and opening up, and always adhered to the principles of Government leadership, development-oriented poverty alleviation, and the mobilization of all sectors of society. It had succeeded in lifting more than 600 million people out of poverty, thereby making an outstanding contribution towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. His Government was planning to eradicate poverty among its entire rural poor population, as measured under current standards, by 2020. Over the previous 60 years, his Government had contributed nearly 400 billion yuan renminbi in assistance to 166 countries and international organizations and deployed over 600,000 aid personnel, and had announced seven times that Government interest-free loans owed by highly indebted poor countries and least developed countries would be exempted from repayment. China would continue its tireless efforts in the task of poverty

eradication as well as its support and assistance to developing countries.

50. **Ms. Ponce** (Philippines) said that economic growth alone did not suffice for poverty eradication. Although her country was a middle income country with consistent high economic growth, nearly 22 million citizens were still been living in poverty. Her Government's development plan aimed to reduce poverty by almost one third by 2022, and specifically targeted the agricultural sector and regions with high inequality. With disasters increasing in intensity and frequency and reversing development gains, greater resiliency would be sought by reducing risk exposure and mitigating its impact, and accelerating recovery when risk materialized. Poverty reduction programmes in the Philippines focused on a range of basic needs, including food and land reform, water, shelter, work, health care, education, social protection, healthy environment, peace and people's participation.

51. Ensuring that women and girls had equal opportunities and achieved their full potential was also integral to her Government's poverty eradication strategy. It was critical that women be enabled to participate in the labour market and enter the formal sector. In that regard, the development plan of the Philippines focused on the full implementation of reproductive health legislation, improving access to child care, promoting work-life balance, providing training for women returning to the workforce, enhancing parental benefits and improving women's access to entrepreneurial opportunities. Her Government also provided scholarships in science, technology, engineering, agriculture and mathematics to encourage the entry of women in those sectors.

52. Her delegation called on the United Nations development system to continue mainstreaming gender and the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions in strategic plans. For its part, her Government was redoubling its efforts from the policy level to the programme level and remained hopeful that the current decade would be the last for poverty eradication.

53. **Ms. Ng** (Singapore) said that the in-depth review of Sustainable Development Goal 1 at the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development had been a sobering reminder of the monumental task that lay ahead. An effective social safety net was essential, and must be guided by underlying values and principles. Those included the dignity and self-reliance of the individual, enabling those who could work, to work; family support, including fostering strong families; and community support: the wider community, including

welfare and grassroots organizations, philanthropists and volunteers should come together to provide care and support, augmenting the support provided by the Government.

54. While maintaining those underlying principles and values, assistance must be redesigned to meet changing and diverse needs. New economic realities such as evolving business models, disruptions and labour market uncertainties meant that more people would probably require support, for longer periods, during job transitions. Lifelong learning and re-training should be emphasized to ensure that citizens had the necessary skill sets for a rapidly changing workplace.

55. The social safety net must respond to the multidimensional nature of poverty. Financial assistance was just one part of the solution. In Singapore, the social safety net also encompassed health care, housing, education, a mandatory social security savings plan, and income supplements for low-wage workers, combining holistic design with its necessary corollary, integrated delivery. In that regard, social service offices were sometimes co-located with career centres and other offices had social assistance, family services and employment services under one roof.

56. It was also important to tailor assistance to the needs of individuals and families. In Singapore, social service officers were empowered to adjust the amount and duration of assistance depending on the unique needs of each case. Although social policies were never perfect and each country had to do what was best for its unique context, taking into account sustainability and the appropriate allocation of resources, now was the time to learn from each other's successes and challenges in order to end poverty in all its forms by 2030.

57. **Mr. Momeni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the eradication of poverty was the greatest global challenge and was an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. His country placed people at the heart of all development efforts and believed in the importance of human development in eradicating poverty. His Government's policies focused on combating inequality; investing in education, health care and social protection; empowering all citizens, especially youth, poor and disadvantaged persons, and female heads of households, through education; and promoting pensions and social insurance. Since the advancement of women was the main driver of sustainable development and a prerequisite for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, his Government was continuing to work towards creating an enabling environment where women were seen both as equal partners and as beneficiaries of development.

58. Although, poverty levels had increased in the Middle East and North Africa since 2013 because of conflict, income inequality was relatively low when compared with other regions. Nevertheless, conflicts and extremism had increased in recent years, and there was a clear link between poverty and peace. It was therefore extremely important to address the eradication of poverty in the Middle East.

59. The United Nations development system had a critical role to play in accelerating poverty eradication, especially through creating an enabling international environment and adequate means of implementation. It must consider the root causes of poverty in developing countries and align its work to support their needs and priorities. Although the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008–2017) had served as a platform to mobilize resources, a stronger partnership for development and enhanced, efficient and system-wide coherence was more important than ever. His country supported the proclamation of the third Decade, in order to maintain momentum.

60. **Ms. Huyen** (Viet Nam) said that the remarkable progress made in global poverty reduction was very encouraging, with 1 billion people having been lifted out of extreme poverty since 1990. Poverty eradication had always been at the heart of her country's development efforts. More than 40 million Vietnamese had risen out of poverty over the past 30 years, largely through economic growth that had created more and better jobs and in which science, technology and innovation had played a key part. However, poverty pockets persisted among ethnic minorities and rural and mountain populations. Furthermore, poverty gains were fragile and much of the population was vulnerable to falling back into poverty as a result of extreme weather events leading to crop failure, human disasters and epidemics, and through dependence on informal sources of income.

61. Viet Nam was one of the countries that was most vulnerable to climate change impacts. Natural disasters had caused average annual economic losses of between 1 and 1.5 per cent of GDP over the previous two decades and more than 70 per cent of the population was exposed to significant natural hazard risks. To maintain the gains in poverty reduction, her country needed to find comprehensive solutions that minimized trade-offs. In that regard, it was focusing on increasing labour productivity and building productive infrastructure, especially in energy, transport, water, sanitation and telecommunications. The modernization of agriculture to increase production and lower natural resource inputs was also a focus.

62. Poverty eradication went hand in hand with social development, as providing basic public services like education and health care and promoting gender equality would build resilience against potential shocks and ensure that progress was more evenly distributed. To tackle those universal challenges, national efforts played a primary role, but international support and cooperation were important to finding efficient and effective solutions more quickly.

63. Viet Nam welcomed integrated policy advice from the United Nations system on development strategies best suited for the country, supported by adequate and effective financing from different sources, including ODA and enhanced financing from international financial institutions.

64. **Ms. Al-Mehaid** (Saudi Arabia) said that one of the primary focuses of her Government's Vision 2030 was empowering women, who now made up almost one third of the workforce. The recent royal decree allowing women in her country to drive automobiles would have numerous economic and social implications. Women sat on municipal councils, the Shura Council and the boards of chambers of commerce. They went abroad to represent Saudi Arabia at international conferences and as part of the diplomatic corps. Women were becoming ever more prominent in business and investment, and a woman was in charge of the Saudi Arabian stock exchange, which was the largest in the Middle East.

65. More than one half of university students in her country were women. The education system strove to achieve gender equality at all levels, especially in areas pertaining to modern technology. Women were pursuing studies in all kinds of fields that were once the exclusive province of men. Saudi Arabia would continue to promote women's rights in accordance with the principles of the Islamic sharia.

66. **Mr. Mminele** (South Africa) said that it was imperative to keep poverty eradication at the core of social, economic and environmental policies. In that regard, a focus on resilience would be useful to sustain the momentum in the face of volatile food and energy prices, global financial and economic crises and natural disasters. In order to eradicate poverty, developing countries needed a fair chance to develop their economies and must be provided with the requisite means of implementation; the unjust international trade system needed to be transformed to enable developing countries to compete on an equal footing; and Member States must demonstrate their commitment to the creation of a rules-based, non-discriminatory multilateral trading system to address systemic imbalances.

67. Inequality within and between countries had resulted in a system in which least developed countries and African countries continued to face infrastructure deficits, especially with regard to transportation, reliable and affordable energy, potable water and sanitation, health services and information and communications networks. That same system had propagated the economic and social marginalization of women. It was a major feat that the international community had succeeded in mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in the 2030 Agenda. The critical role played by women must be taken into account in every poverty eradication policy and discourse.

68. **Mr. Madisa** (Botswana) said that Africa continued to face major challenges in eradicating poverty, including a lack of financial resources for development, unfavourable terms of trade, a decline in commodity prices, weak domestic infrastructure and social services and a high unemployment rate, especially for youth. Despite signs of a global economic recovery, the pace of job creation remained inadequate vis-à-vis the growing labour force. In order to eradicate poverty and achieve sustained economic growth, national development strategies must take a holistic and integrated approach to poverty eradication, incorporating access to health, education and food; the empowerment of women and youth; employment creation and growth through trade and enhanced public and private sector investment; and social protection for the most vulnerable groups.

69. His Government had made poverty eradication its top priority through social initiatives such as a labour-based public works programme, old age pension schemes, school meals programmes, social protection programmes for the destitute and for orphans, and agricultural subsidies. The empowerment of women and girls was critical for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; although challenges remained, his country had made significant progress in that area.

70. Developing countries continued to face challenges in developing sufficient human resources to meet national development needs. His country therefore called on its development partners to continue providing technical assistance and capacity-building, particularly in the areas of science and technology, where Africa lagged behind all other regions.

71. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia) said that despite substantial progress made since its independence in 1990, Namibia faced considerable development challenges. Those included extreme inequality, particularly among youth, major droughts and floods, an increased unemployment rate, inadequate housing and widespread poverty.

72. His Government had instituted a variety of poverty reduction plans. To address the need for decent work and job creation, it had put in place policies such as a minimum wage, safety standards, environmental guidelines, employee ownership schemes and government investment. To combat poverty, all primary and secondary school children had recently been granted the right to free basic and secondary education. Namibia was undergoing a demographic transition and had an opportunity to leverage its many young workers in order to achieve accelerated economic growth. To that end, it had developed youth credit and vocational training schemes as well as measures that gave preference to youth in skill development and employment. It had also created social grants in the form of tax exemptions for the poor, increased pensions for older persons and a solidarity tax earmarked for poverty eradication initiatives; and had established a food bank staffed by youth, aimed at combating hunger among its most impoverished citizens.

73. His country was continuing to pursue macroeconomic stability, including fiscal discipline, which directly benefited women, especially those in rural areas currently classified as vulnerable and extremely poor. Women's access to economic and productive resources had improved since independence.

74. Namibia considered its classification as an upper middle-income country problematic as that did not take into account the huge income disparity between the wealthy and the poor, a result of apartheid prior to independence. The classification unfairly prevented his country from accessing concessional funding necessary to pursue its developmental goals and eradicate poverty.

75. **Mr. Tuy** (Cambodia) said that over the past two decades, his country had achieved a remarkable transformation that had placed it among the countries that had been most successful at implementing the Millennium Development Goals. Newly classified as a lower middle-income country, it was now building on that foundation to implement the 2030 Agenda, especially in regard to poverty reduction. His Government was investing in education and health care and was seeking to develop the industrial sector and diversify exports away from the garment industry, tourism and agriculture, which were vulnerable to external shocks and climate change. To achieve those objectives, it was promoting the development of technology and innovation, an area where it would require support from developed and advanced developing countries.

76. Cambodia had succeeded in reducing its poverty rate to 13.5 per cent in 2014; it had also received a

United Nations award in 2013 for halving hunger before the 2015 target. Furthermore, it was among the top seven countries globally for its improvements in the Human Development Index between 1990 and 2015. Those remarkable achievements had been driven by robust and equitable macroeconomic growth, strong checks on inflation, significant increases in agricultural production, environmental protection, improved infrastructure, employment creation through trade and investment, public administration and judicial reforms, and fast growth in the service sector, including tourism.

77. Since ODA could play a significant role in achieving the 2030 Agenda, his delegation urged developed countries to make a greater effort to honour their commitments to developing countries, especially least developed countries. That assistance should be unconditional, in order to build a fairer and more balanced global development partnership and open market access.

78. **Mr. Tupouniua** (Tonga) said that poverty eradication was a multidimensional issue that required multisectoral solutions by all stakeholders and at all levels, not just government. Tonga's national development plan, aimed at achieving a higher quality of life for all, would be implemented under an inclusive and integrated approach.

79. It was important for countries to recognize that poverty eradication needed to be at the core of social, economic and environmental policies. His Government had put in place policies focused on human resources development and poverty eradication, including improving education and training aimed at life-long learning; addressing non-communicable diseases by promoting healthy lifestyle initiatives and discouraging the import of unhealthy food products; establishing formal social services for the most vulnerable, including older persons and persons with disabilities; and strengthening women's economic empowerment to ensure equal access to decent work. Tonga acknowledged the assistance of the European Union in supporting its initiatives on women's productive employment.

80. His delegation viewed the various challenges as opportunities that could become a platform for the mobilization of resources, the establishment of stronger development partnerships and the enhancement of United Nations system-wide coherence for poverty eradication, women in development and human resources development in small island developing States.

81. **Mr. Al-Khafaji** (Iraq) said that despite his Government's best efforts, his country's poverty rate

had started climbing again in recent years. The main culprits were the decline in oil prices and the occupation of major portions of Iraqi territory by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorists. Large-scale population displacement made it difficult to implement anti-poverty programmes. Nevertheless, his country had drawn up a 2018–2020 poverty reduction strategy that included a social development fund for which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had already set aside \$50 million. The goal of that fund would be to augment income, improve living conditions and promote gender equality. In addition, “cash-for-work” programmes had been launched in several liberated areas, and facilitated loans were being made available to promote microfinance and job creation. He called on the international community to provide additional support for such programmes, which were also an important contribution to efforts to eradicate terrorism.

82. His country was the first in the Middle East and North Africa region to have adopted a national plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security. His Government was also making efforts to ensure implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. He called on the international community to help ensure that Iraqi women saved from the clutches of ISIL received the legal, health, psychological, economic and educational support they needed. That would include establishing safe houses, documenting the crimes perpetrated against women by ISIL, and working for the release of thousands of abducted Yazidi women.

83. **Mr. Thammavongsa** (Lao People’s Democratic Republic) said that since many developing countries continued to face numerous challenges, related to the international trading structure, fluctuating commodity prices and the impacts of climate change and natural disasters, international development cooperation under the framework of global partnership must be strengthened. His delegation called on development partners to scale up financing for United Nations operational activities, both for the core budget and for flexible non-core resources which were key to ensuring the effective operation of United Nations entities.

84. Poverty eradication and rural development were key priorities in each of his country’s national socioeconomic development plans. Since unexploded ordnance remained a major obstacle to poverty eradication, his Government had adopted a programme entitled “Lives safe from UXO; Remove the UXO obstacle to national development”, in September 2016. Through his country’s concerted efforts to implement its successive national development plans and the global

development agendas, with support and assistance from development partners, the poverty rate had fallen from 35.5 per cent in 2003 to 23.2 per cent in 2013 and was expected to be even lower in 2017.

85. His Government would exert its utmost efforts to mobilize domestic and external resources and continue to work closely with development partners, international organizations, the private sector and civil society in the joint endeavour to eradicate poverty.

86. **Mr. Tamalgo** (Burkina Faso) said that between 2000 and 2015, his Government had drawn up and implemented development strategies and policies which had resulted in a reduction of the national poverty rate from 46.7 per cent in 2009 to 40.1 per cent in 2014. Despite those results, poverty remained widespread, especially in rural areas.

87. His Government had therefore created a national development plan for 2016–2020, whose main goal was the structural transformation of the economy through the creation of an enabling environment for industry and the promotion of sustainable and competitive industrial development through investment in such areas as energy, transport, technology and reform of the educational system. Those efforts had resulted in a two-fold increase in productivity in the primary sector in the marketing of agricultural products and the proportion of processed agricultural products, and in the share of manufacturing in the GNP. Furthermore, the increase in agricultural productivity and in the processing of agricultural products, especially cotton, would lead to a change in the type and value of products exported.

88. The effective implementation of the national sustainable development plan was expected to lead to an improvement in political, administrative, economic, local and environmental governance; the emergence of a modern economy based on an evolving and more competitive primary sector in which the processing and service industries had a greater share; the creation of at least 50,000 decent jobs per year; a significant decrease in the poverty rate; a reduction of the fertility rate and of the child mortality rate; and an accelerated rate of development of human capital along with changes in production and consumption models. The progressive formalization of the informal sector would reduce its contribution to the added value of the service sector, and lead to an increase in exports of manufactured goods.

89. Burkina Faso planned to meet its development challenges by focusing on the mobilization of domestic resources, using innovative methods to finance its development plan. The fulfilment of the ODA commitments of its development partners would enable it to step up its structural investments.

90. **Ms. Kalamwina** (Zambia) said that despite Zambia's progress towards its goal of becoming a prosperous middle-income country, poverty persisted even in times of strong economic growth, standing at 54.4 per cent in urban areas and 76.6 per cent in rural areas. The number of vulnerable households had risen and comprised many people with limited access to essential basic services such as health, education, water and sanitation.

91. Her country had recently launched its 7th National Development Plan, 2017–2021, premised on an integrated multisectoral approach, with a view to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The plan focused on human capital development, and included measures targeted at extremely poor and vulnerable households to improve their welfare and livelihoods through empowerment, social assistance and support, cash transfers, school feeding programmes and food security packages for vulnerable small-scale farmers. Her Government had also created programmes for the economic empowerment and development of women, youth and citizens in general. In an effort to ensure that all men and women had equal rights to economic resources, it would promote ownership and control over land and other forms of property, and new technologies.

92. Her delegation called on the international community to step up development cooperation and support for poverty eradication in developing countries.

93. **Mr. Abebe** (Ethiopia) said that although poverty had been reduced in Africa and least developed countries, it remained one of the greatest challenges. International support must be galvanized for national efforts to reduce poverty, address rising inequality, create productive jobs and expand social protection programmes.

94. With public participation, his Government had continued its coordinated development efforts during the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008–2017), resulting in double digit economic growth through the successful implementation of three consecutive national development plans that had integrated the Millennium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant global frameworks. Poverty had been halved during the Decade, and per capita income had more than doubled.

95. It was indisputable that there could be no sustainable development without gender equality; Ethiopia had therefore continued to emphasize legal and policy measures giving special attention to the economic empowerment, political participation and leadership of women and girls. Despite encouraging results, the battle against poverty was far from over. In that regard, the

generation of decent and productive jobs, particularly for women and youth, and the consolidation of structural transformation would remain top development priorities. His Government was determined to accelerate its endeavours to implement the Sustainable Development Goals by integrating them into their current national development plan.

96. Since poverty was a universal challenge, national efforts could not succeed without a revitalized global partnership and an enabling development environment, an important lesson that should be drawn from the Decade. A strengthened political commitment and a sense of urgency should characterize the implementation of the commitments under the 2030 Agenda.

97. **Mr. Ramírez** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that poverty was the consequence of capitalism, an unjust and exclusionary economic model that caused wars, hunger and deprivation. To eradicate poverty, it would be necessary to overcome foreign occupation, political and economic destabilization, colonialism, wars and an unfair international financial system, among other obstacles. The growing gap between rich and poor was compounding poverty and inequality. A substantive change to the economic model was required so that everyone would benefit rather than just a select elite. Poverty was a complex problem with many causes and could not be reduced to simple financial or monetary terms. A multidimensional approach was required. Poverty indices must take into account economic and social factors and citizens' rights.

98. In order to achieve sustained growth, developing countries needed employment, and control over their own natural resources. His delegation therefore called for sovereign management of natural resources and fair prices as a legitimate and effective development instrument. The illegal exploitation of natural resources by third parties, in particular colonial powers, contributed to driving populations into poverty and desperation and infringed the sovereignty of nations.

99. Since recovering control over its natural resources in 1999 and distributing oil revenue to the people, Venezuela had been working successfully to address the needs of its citizens. His Government had drawn up a plan to strengthen production infrastructure to support its socioeconomic agenda and its plan for the achievement of zero poverty by 2019. By the end of 2006, Venezuela had met its goal of halving extreme poverty when compared with 1990 levels. The rate had further decreased from 11.1 per cent to 7.1 per cent by the end of 2012. Venezuela had been of the few countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

100. In that context, and in spite of the unilateral and coercive economic, financial and commercial measures imposed against it, his Government would continue to pursue and implement programmes and policies to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals, reduce levels of exclusion and create greater equality while seeking to protect economic and social rights.

101. Countries must work together based on common but differentiated responsibilities to bridge the gap between the richest and poorest. In the modern world with its technological capabilities, where more than one third of global food production was discarded, there was no justification for poverty to continue.

102. **Mr. Gonzalez Pena** (Cuba) said that the current unjust, unsustainable international economic order was increasingly marginalizing many nations of the South. Hunger, extreme poverty, illiteracy, lack of sanitation and premature death remained a constant for many countries, and those most affected were the least responsible for that crisis. No one could talk about progress in poverty eradication when more than 80 per cent of the world population subsisted on less than one dollar a day, nearly 1 billion lived in extreme poverty, almost 800 million were illiterate, and the number of people suffering from chronic hunger had increased by 38 million in 2016. That contrasted with the opulence of the developed world, which was responsible for the current serious environmental crisis aggravated by unsustainable global patterns of production and consumption.

103. It would not be possible to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions if massive resources that could be used for development were allocated to military purposes, protectionist trade practices increased, ODA declined in real terms and external debt, already repaid several times over, continued to increase.

104. Despite the unjust and criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America, adverse extreme weather events and the recent global economic crisis, Cuba had made great strides and had already met several of the Sustainable Development Goals. His country's infant mortality rate was among the lowest in the world and life expectancy was 78 years. No one in Cuba was illiterate and its people enjoyed universal, accessible and free education and health care. There was one doctor for every 125 inhabitants and a vaccination programme that covered all Cuban children. Those achievements could be credited to the political will of his Government

to concentrate resources on areas of high social impact. More than two thirds of his country's yearly budget was allocated to the improvement of education, health, social security and welfare, culture, sports and scientific and technical research.

105. Cuba attached great importance to South-South cooperation and international solidarity and shared its modest resources with needy countries through international cooperation. Over 40,000 Cuban health-care professionals were working in 64 countries. A Cuban literacy programme had helped millions of adults from 28 countries learn to read and write and a joint initiative with countries that were members of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America had enabled hundreds of thousands of people from other nations to undergo free eye surgery to have their sight restored. Cuba would continue to share its human capital and best practices.

106. **Mr. Dzonzi** (Malawi) said that poverty remained the main hurdle to sustainable development. Levels of extreme poverty were still very high in Africa, especially in African least developed countries. In 2013, Malawi had poverty rates that exceeded 70 per cent.

107. Poverty was the sum of many factors including health, education, financial and resource accessibility, and inequality. Malawi had made great strides in reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and in maternal and child mortality rates. However, unemployment was still a challenge for its young and growing labour force, and a lack of reliable energy sources affected the ability to achieve the technological diversification, economic expansion and increased industrialization required for economic growth and the redistribution of wealth to reduce poverty.

108. Discussions on development must include the participation of women. The feminization of poverty was real; women and girls should be accommodated at every stage of the development process. His country was promoting their participation at all levels of development, including enrolment in education and skills development, political leadership and business ventures. In that regard, Malawi welcomed the recommendation that labour market policies should improve women's participation in the labour market by facilitating the reconciliation of unpaid care work with employment and by eliminating labour market gender discrimination.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.