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Chair: Ms. Fisher-Tsin (Vice-Chair) (Israel)

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In the absence of Mr. Niang (Senegal), Ms. Fisher-Tsin (Israel), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 22: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (continued)

- (a) Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027) (continued) (A/74/210)**
- (b) Women in development (continued) (A/74/111 and A/74/279)**
- (c) Human resources development (continued) (A/74/284)**
- (d) Eradicating rural poverty to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (continued) (A/74/257)**

1. **Mr. Córdova Chabla** (Ecuador) said that Ecuador was complementing the actions taken as part of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027) with national sustainable development efforts. If cycles of poverty were to be broken, a new comprehensive definition of poverty was needed, to acknowledge that economic poverty was only one part of a much more complex picture. His Government pursued policies and programmes designed to address the root causes of poverty, such as inequality and exclusion, with a focus on the most vulnerable. Its national development plan for the period from 2017 to 2021, which incorporated goals and priority areas, was built around the rights of every Ecuadorian citizen.

2. The development policies of the Government largely addressed health care, education and access to the labour market and housing. Furthermore, public policies were based on the State's duty to protect citizens' rights. His Government was determined to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, and prioritized gender equality in all aspects of life, including access to quality education, financial resources and opportunities and participation in decision-making.

3. Human capacity-building must be informed by the digital revolution, especially as the digital divide continued to disadvantage developing countries. Lifelong learning should equip citizens with the skills needed for a constantly evolving labour market. Ecuador promoted full and decent work and full societal participation. Sustainable economic development dictated the need to combat tax evasion, illicit financial flows and corruption. With the support of the international financial and development institutions, economic and social stability were possible. Lastly, the

private sector's role went beyond job creation and economic growth: it should also foster inclusion and prosperity.

4. **Mr. Al-Mawlani** (Bahrain) said that his country was proud of the role played by women in its development. Women had been attending school in Bahrain since the 1920s and had taken part in municipal elections since the 1930s. The first Bahraini woman nurse had been appointed in 1941, and the first Bahraini woman lawyer had been called to the bar in 1976. The Supreme Council for Women had been established in 2001. In 2016, women had made up more than half of government employees and had occupied a substantial number of high positions, including that of minister. Women accounted for one third of the private-sector workforce and held 14 per cent of seats on boards of directors. Some 43 per cent of commercial licences were held by women.

5. In 2015, over 60 per cent of doctors in Bahrain had been women. In 2016, almost three quarters of education professionals in Bahrain had been women. Almost one quarter of members of the Shura Council were women, and 8 per cent of members of the Council of Representatives were women, including, for the first time in history, the Council's President. His country was proud to have hosted a programme office of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) since 2017.

6. **Mr. Sengdalavong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that his country was determined to achieve sustainable development, with a particular focus on poverty eradication. To that end, it was implementing a national socioeconomic development plan for the period from 2016 to 2025 that was aligned with internationally agreed development initiatives, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The plan's implementation had already boosted economic growth and improved living standards, contributing to his Government's goal of graduating from the least developed country category. In 2018, the Committee for Development Policy had announced that the Lao People's Democratic Republic had met two of the three graduation criteria: gross national income per capita and the human assets index score. To build on that progress, the country must next enhance its industrial competitiveness and reduce its dependency on natural resources, both of which would reduce its vulnerability to external economic shocks.

7. Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular of Goal 1, on eradicating poverty, would advance his country's progress towards graduation, and was high on the national agenda.

Poverty eradication was a major element in both the national Vision 2030 plan and the 2016–2025 socioeconomic development plan, which included four specific poverty-related outcomes with indicators that were aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

8. **Mr. Getisu** (Ethiopia) said that in a world of abundance, hundreds of millions of people remained in absolute poverty, an unacceptable state of affairs. Multilateral partnerships must be revitalized to support national poverty eradication and development endeavours. The road ahead was difficult, but the achievements of the past year should serve as inspiration. In that regard, Ethiopia appreciated the work of United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and funds, as well as its regional commissions, to support Member States' fight against poverty.

9. His Government had introduced policies aimed at inclusive, rapid and sustained economic growth. Integration and implementation of its industrial, agricultural and environmental policies had allowed Ethiopia to significantly reduce poverty, and per capita income had grown substantially. His Government had also established a social safety net to protect the most vulnerable. The specific objective of structural transformation was to make Ethiopia an African light-manufacturing hub by 2025, and to that end the Government continued to pursue an integrated industrial strategy. In particular, it was expanding its labour-intensive manufacturing sector through the construction of environmentally friendly industrial parks. Development partners had provided critical support for his country's structural transformation and economic diversification efforts, but it was not enough. His Government was therefore preparing a development plan for the period up to 2030, to take into consideration the impact of demographic changes on national development. It had incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals into its 15-year plan, as well as a shorter-term five-year plan.

10. Ethiopia was determined to do its part in the global fight against poverty, but as a least developed country it was hindered by a number of challenges including the effects of climate change, a lack of good governance, weak institutional capacity and development funding gaps. His Government was committed to redoubling its efforts to reduce poverty, create jobs, ensure food security and accelerate inclusive and sustainable economic growth, but concerted global actions were needed to fortify its efforts.

11. **Ms. Badjie** (Gambia) said that in the Gambia, income poverty had stagnated between 2011 and 2016,

a legacy of her country's 22-year-long dictatorship, but, at last, it was starting to fall. Her Government's national development plan for the period from 2018 to 2021 was predicated on an integrated approach to the eradication of poverty and inequality and included measures to strengthen good governance, build human capital, ensure the provision of basic social services and boost environmental sustainability. Because the majority of the country's population worked in agriculture, the Government was developing strategies to reduce reliance on rainfall, especially in the light of climate change. It was also strengthening value-chain approaches and improving rural infrastructure, to better connect communities to markets and social services. Access to basic and secondary education had risen, and the Government was now working to improve the quality of education.

12. Despite government awareness of the important link between women's empowerment and national development, particularly in terms of poverty eradication and food security, women continued to face many obstacles to realizing their potential, as a result of unequal power relations between the genders. Women had less access than men to opportunities, especially to land, other productive assets, financial resources and services. Therefore, the Government was investing in women's economic activities, particularly in agriculture and in the informal sector. It was also rolling out a large-scale social protection programme designed to improve the coordination of social assistance and increase inclusion of the extremely poor, including through cash transfers. The Gambia called for improved collaboration among Member States to strengthen implementation of the 2030 Agenda and urged developed countries to fulfil their official development assistance (ODA) commitments.

13. **Mr. Sharif** (Sudan) said that although developing countries had seen significant economic growth since the year 2000, they did not appear to be on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 1 target of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030. The Sudan was taking a number of poverty eradication measures. It had announced a 10-year programme, the first phase of which would address rising commodity prices and the high cost of living and would focus on providing for the essential needs of citizens. His Government would also be conducting a national family budget survey to help determine what measures should be part of a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. In the meantime, the Sudan was continuing to implement its ongoing poverty reduction policies.

14. However, those poverty eradication efforts faced numerous challenges. The Sudan was a low-income country that was just emerging from conflict and

suffered from land degradation and high displacement and migration levels. It was also host to some 2 million refugees from neighbouring countries. A combination of external indebtedness and unilateral coercive sanctions was undermining progress towards sustainable development. In order for its poverty reduction efforts to succeed, the Sudan needed international assistance in the form of technology transfer, capacity-building for national statistical research and data analysis, and fulfilment of ODA commitments.

15. **Mr. Bokoum** (Burkina Faso) said that more than 4 in 10 people in his country lived beneath the poverty threshold. Extreme poverty was concentrated in rural areas, where resources were lacking, and large families and vulnerability to fluctuations in rainfall and external shocks perpetuated cycles of poverty. The Government's 2016 economic and social development plan, which was aligned with the 2030 Agenda, focused on institutional reform, development of human capital and reinvigoration of the sectors that would support economic growth and job creation. In addition to a range of policies established under the plan, the Government had set up a number of poverty eradication projects and programmes, including a programme for helping persons with disabilities to find work and a rural entrepreneurship programme. It had also created various funds to contribute to poverty eradication, including specific funds for women's economic activities and youth-led initiatives.

16. The Government was enhancing social protection for the elderly, with the proportion of persons aged over 64 years of age receiving a pension having grown by some 13 per cent between 2015 and 2018. Its inclusion policies focused on persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. Among them was a vocational training, employment and entrepreneurship programme for persons with disabilities, which had facilitated the financing of 2,325 microprojects worth a total of \$771,912,035; and the establishment of a 10 per cent quota for persons with disabilities in public sector jobs. Furthermore, the Government had taken action to strengthen the universal health insurance scheme, facilitate the access of disadvantaged groups to financial resources and provide annual medical appointments for retired workers and their surviving partners, among other initiatives. Despite the Government's efforts, however, the day-to-day lives of most citizens unfortunately remained largely unchanged. The eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions would be impossible without vanquishing rural poverty. Burkina Faso remained committed to playing its part to create a peaceful, prosperous world where no one was left behind.

17. **Mr. Al Mazroui** (United Arab Emirates) said that his country was a global leader in poverty eradication and had received a perfect score on poverty eradication in *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018*. The United Arab Emirates was also a global leader in international cooperation to eradicate poverty and reduce the indebtedness of countries facing economic hardship. It was a participant in numerous international organizations that focused on fighting poverty. In 2019, it had contributed some \$3.8 billion in ODA, amounting to 0.95 per cent of its gross national product.

18. Education was the first step towards poverty eradication. The United Arab Emirates provided education assistance to countries around the world. In February 2018, it had pledged \$100 million to the Global Partnership for Education, which worked to provide quality education to 870 million children in 89 developing countries. Empowering women and girls would be a major focus of his country's international poverty eradication assistance for the period 2017–2021.

19. **Monsignor Hansen** (Observer for the Holy See) said that poverty rates remained alarming around the world, especially in the least developed countries, and most of all in Africa. The world was not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Poverty reduction was beginning to stagnate in developing countries due to a number of factors, including climate-related disasters and the global economic situation.

20. Poverty was not simple economic exclusion but affected all aspects of life and manifested in the cultural, educational, political, social and spiritual dimensions. Its eradication, therefore, required more than economic measures aimed at increasing the amount of money per day on which a person lived. Experience had shown the inadequacy of per capita income growth as a stand-alone measure of poverty reduction. Efforts should take into consideration the whole human person and the complex reality of poverty. Policies that supported job creation and decent work for all were key in that regard. A people-centred approach was vital to promote integrated poverty eradication measures. While education was a crucial antidote to poverty and key to social and economic mobility, ensuring access to high-quality education for all was essential not only to give people the skills needed for the labour market, but also to enable them grow and flourish as individuals. Health care also played a major part in poverty eradication as close to 100 million people each year were pushed into extreme poverty as a consequence of health-related expenses. Women, and rural women in particular, were disproportionately affected by poverty and exclusion. They must therefore receive greater support, including

through policies to reduce the gender pay gap, support the transition from the informal to the formal sector and value unpaid care work.

21. **Ms. Staworzynska** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that gainful employment remained the most reliable way of escaping poverty and was a precondition for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Around the world, young workers continued to be vulnerable to unemployment, while the growing share of older workers was adding further straining social protection systems and the labour market. The changing world of work required effective policies to harness the opportunities offered by technology and demographic trends.

22. Access to social protection was key to poverty eradication, but only 29 per cent of the world's population currently enjoyed comprehensive social protection. Recent ILO research had shown that income support, in particular, was vital to protecting jobless workers and, when combined with active labour market policies, could be highly effective in tackling labour market barriers. In the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work adopted at the recent International Labour Conference, all ILO member States were called upon to ensure universal access to comprehensive and sustainable social protection.

23. Policies promoting formalization were also key to poverty eradication. In rural areas the overwhelming majority of those in extreme poverty were working, and structural labour market changes particularly affected informal workers, who generally faced worse employment conditions than those in the formal sector. ILO Recommendation No. 204, concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy, offered strategies and guidance to help countries promote the transition to the formal economy.

24. The gender gap perpetuated cycles of poverty, and women continued to comprise the vast majority of the potential, underutilized labour force. Women were also disproportionately subject to violence and harassment at work, which adversely impacted their access to work and their chances of remaining and advancing in the labour market. In that regard, in June 2019, ILO had adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), a landmark convention on their elimination in the world of work. All ILO member States were encouraged to ratify the Convention in order to create a better, safer working environment for all.

25. An inclusive future of work with full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all was fundamental to putting an end to poverty. ILO was pleased to have contributed to the system-wide plan of

action for the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, and stood ready to support the Committee to devise policies for poverty eradication and decent work for all.

26. **Ms. Linke Heep** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that women were key agents in a country's drive towards higher levels of industrialization. Their empowerment contributed to economic and social development, which facilitated prosperity and social cohesion at the regional, national and international levels. Evidence clearly showed that empowering women economically was one of the most promising ways to lift millions out of poverty and spur growth and structural change, especially in low- and middle-income countries. The international community must therefore harness the opportunities for women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment offered by the new era of industrialization.

27. While agriculture-based industrial products accounted for half of all exports from developing countries, only 30 per cent of those products were processed goods, compared to 98 per cent of agriculture-based exports from developed countries. UNIDO promoted growth strategies based on the diversification of rural economies, supported the development of agro-value chains and facilitated the transition of informal activities into the formal sector. Its technical cooperation activities focused on adding value to agricultural commodities, including food, leather, textiles and wood, with a view to supporting the economic transformation of countries, improving employment and income opportunities and reinforcing sustainable livelihoods.

28. The lack of an enabling business environment and a feeble entrepreneurial culture were also significant impediments in many developing countries; young men and women often found no outlet for their entrepreneurial aspirations and found themselves trapped in unrewarding, unskilled jobs. In response, UNIDO applied strategies that helped women and young people to realize their economic potential. It provided technical training to prepare young people for jobs or self-employment in trades that were in high demand in local markets. The agro-industrial activities of UNIDO thus helped poor and marginalized rural populations, urban agro-industries and communities facing human security challenges.

29. **Ms. Mucavi** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), speaking also on behalf of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), said that 80 per cent of the poorest people in the

world lived in rural parts of developing countries. The deprivations they suffered went beyond insufficient income: they experienced social marginalization and exclusion, hunger and malnutrition, poor living conditions and a lack of access to essential health services, basic infrastructure, resources and employment opportunities. Empowering rural dwellers was essential if no one was to be left behind. Poverty and inequalities in access to resources and human capital slowed economic progress and recovery after economic downturns. Hunger and malnutrition affected the future of the younger generation, causing learning difficulties, poor health and lower lifetime earnings and productivity.

30. In that connection, FAO and IFAD were co-hosting an event on how to renew efforts to address rural poverty to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 1. The objective was to raise awareness of the importance of rural poverty and hunger reduction at the local, national, regional and international levels. FAO had recently launched a framework for action on eradicating rural extreme poverty, and the *2019 Rural Development Report* of IFAD provided analysis that could inform policies, programmes and investments to promote a rural transformation that included young people. The global community must urgently strengthen its engagement and actions to meet the commitments of the 2030 Agenda in time.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.