



General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
30 March 2020

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 15th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 11 October 2019, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Braun (Luxembourg)

Contents

Agenda item 66: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

- (a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)
- (b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*)

Agenda item 26: Advancement of women (*continued*)

- (a) Advancement of women (*continued*)
- (b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Management Section (dms@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>)

19-17588 (E)



Please recycle A small graphic of a recycling symbol, consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



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

Agenda item 66: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) ([A/74/136](#), [A/74/162](#), [A/74/231](#), [A/74/246](#), [A/74/249](#) and [A/74/259](#))

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*) ([A/74/240](#))

1. **Mr. Rivera Roldan** (Peru) said that his country reaffirmed the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in ensuring that action was taken for all children to gain access to quality education and health care and to achieve their full potential in a safe environment. In that regard, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represented an opportunity to join forces and address multidimensional problems in an innovative way with a view to fostering an inclusive environment that promoted the well-being of all, in particular the most vulnerable, and in keeping with the commitment of leaving no one behind. The 2030 Agenda provided an opportunity to rethink childhood from a more dynamic, cross-cutting perspective, enabling States to harmonize their laws, policies and programmes with the Convention.

2. Peru had made significant progress in acknowledging, protecting and promoting the rights of children and adolescents, including through its national plan of action for children and adolescents, which set out goals and guidelines for the period until 2021 for each State sector. Significant progress had been achieved in combating childhood anaemia, and the current Government had prioritized reducing infant mortality, improving the quality of health and education, and increasing access to drinking water, although challenges remained despite increased public investment in child-oriented policies.

3. Regarding children without parental care, Peru had adopted a norm with the status of a law whose purpose was to provide comprehensive protection to those children and to children at risk of losing parental care. The norm prioritized their right to live, grow and develop within the family, respecting family ties in all except the most extraordinary circumstances and ensuring that the rights of children and adolescents were neither diminished nor restricted. Member States were responsible for protecting the rights of children and restoring any rights that had been infringed, in particular for the most vulnerable, including children with disabilities, displaced and refugee children, and children without parental care.

4. Progress for the most marginalized children and families was central to the Sustainable Development Goals, and inequality must not be allowed to persist through generations. Replacing vicious cycles with virtuous cycles would enable poor children to compete on an equal footing with children from more prosperous backgrounds, improving not only their own lives but society as a whole. His country was committed to strengthening the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national policies for the promotion and protection of the rights of children and adolescents across all State sectors and levels of Government.

5. **Ms. Stepanyan** (Armenia) said that the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child should provide important momentum for a frank conversation on the most pressing challenges faced by humanity for the protection of children, in particular children in a vulnerable situation. Armenia had signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure in September 2019 and would submit its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child by the end of the year. Her country had also joined the global pledge entitled “For every child, every right”, launched by the Group of Friends for Children and the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. Inclusive social development and the attainment of the highest standards of human rights were guiding national reforms, under which a strategic programme for the protection of the rights of the child had been created. The programme aimed to address the needs of children in vulnerable situations by improving protection systems, guaranteeing inclusive and accessible education for children with disabilities and preventing violence against children. In an important development in social protection for children, free universal health coverage for all children under the age of 18 years had been instituted and funded. Her Government was also prioritizing the deinstitutionalization of children, chiefly by supporting families and facilitating their access to social services based on the firm conviction that every child had the right to live in a family. Norms and regulations on foster care had also been revised to incorporate the training and monitoring of foster families. The Government was working hand in hand with civil society and international partners, and that cooperation had delivered significant results in raising awareness, in providing alternative services, and in social integration and deinstitutionalization, in particular for children with disabilities.

7. She noted with concern that the Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict ([A/73/907-S/2019/509](#)) referred to extensive crimes and

human rights violations perpetrated against children. The effective protection of children in situations of armed conflict required a strengthened commitment to the implementation of international instruments, early warning and action, and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance. Armenia rejected the unlawful military use of civilian infrastructure, in particular schools, hospitals and places of worship, and was working closely with the International Committee of the Red Cross to create shelters and safe rooms in schools in border regions and to ensure safety in schools in line with its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration. She urged States to sign the major multilateral instruments for the protection of children, including the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (the Paris Principles), the Paris Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups, and the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers.

8. The empowerment of girls through enhanced educational opportunities was crucial for sustainable development, and several technology centres in Armenia were working to encourage the active participation of girls in science, technology and innovation. In support of its candidacy for the Human Rights Council, Armenia had pledged to foster human rights education by including the rights of the child in school curricula and making effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) in education. Although children were the rights holders, the primary responsibility for upholding their rights lay with adults and she looked forward to reinforced action in that regard to ensure that no child was left behind.

9. **Mr. Fialho Rocha** (Cabo Verde) said that his country's policy for the protection and promotion of the rights of the child was based on article 3.2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Cabo Verde was a signatory to most of the international legal instruments on the rights of the child and was in the process of ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure. In keeping with an ongoing commitment to strengthening child protection policies and institutions, his country was promoting free, mandatory and universal education up to the completion of secondary school. An action plan for the prevention and elimination of child labour had also been put in place, which incorporated a list of jobs considered hazardous for children and adolescents and also oversight and accountability mechanisms, including a national committee to prevent and combat child labour. A national committee to combat sexual

violence against children and exploitation of children had also been created, which was focused on maternal and child health, enhanced social protection and measures to combat poverty.

10. Governments and national institutions bore the primary responsibility for defining and implementing policies on the rights of the child, with support from families, non-governmental organizations and civil society at large. In that regard, international cooperation and support from partners remained important in Cabo Verde, particularly in the light of the barriers it faced as a small island developing State. Children and adolescents were the foundation of future economic, social and environmental sustainable development, and investing in their rights was an investment in that foundation. The strategic sustainable development plan of Cabo Verde for the period 2017–2021 had set shared economic growth targets that focused on eliminating poverty, reducing regional inequalities between its islands, achieving social inclusion and justice and building resilience in the face of climate and environmental effects that were impacting development. In keeping with the 2030 Agenda, the plan sought to leave no child behind.

11. **Mr. Alkalaj** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that in joining the global pledge “For every child, every right”, his country was reaffirming its commitment to upholding and protecting the rights and principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As one of the first countries to have signed and ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, Bosnia and Herzegovina attached particular importance to that issue and to the “Children, Not Soldiers” campaign of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

12. In 2013, Bosnia and Herzegovina had established a Council for Children to develop and coordinate agreements for the implementation of the Convention and to foster social inclusion for the most vulnerable and marginalized children and families, in particular the Roma. A new action plan for the period 2020–2023 was being prepared by the Council of Ministers to set goals and define measures to create the best living conditions for children and families, advance their psychological growth and social inclusion, and involve them in decision-making. The plan, which focused on eight objectives, should improve implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, including by improving child protection mechanisms and raising awareness of violence against children.

13. Regarding the right to education and a child's right to grow up in a family environment, a platform for the development of universal preschool education had been adopted under the action plan, which harmonized preschool education policies with international standards. Significant progress had been made in strengthening family-based alternatives to institutional care and by transforming public homes for children. On a related note, foster families were also receiving enhanced training. The campaign “#Every Child Needs a Family” had been launched in 2017 with support from the European Union and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) country team. She lauded UNICEF as a global leader in the promotion and protection of the rights of children. Her country remained committed to the rights of children around the world.

14. **Mr. Monyane** (Lesotho) said that target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals gave renewed impetus to efforts to realize the right of every child to live free from fear, neglect, abuse and exploitation. Action to address children's rights had been stepped up across Africa, including through the launch of “Girls, not brides”, a continent-wide campaign aimed at addressing child marriage, but the protection of children's rights had not been fully institutionalized in some countries, including Lesotho. His country had, however, adopted numerous laws and policies to enhance the protection and promotion of the rights of children, including laws making it compulsory for every child to attend school, establishing the legal age of marriage at 21 years for both men and women and requiring the written consent of legal guardians to allow marriage from the age of 18 years. A children's protection and welfare bill was being drafted and would consolidate issues affecting children into a single piece of legislation based on the principles of interpretation enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Lastly, in 2017, his Government had launched a campaign to end child marriage. He called on all Member States to coordinate their efforts to address child marriage, female genital mutilation, child labour and child soldiers.

15. **Ms. Moutchou** (Morocco) said that much had been accomplished since the adoption of the Convention, but much remained to be done, as many children were still being left behind. All States should engage further to spare children from the agonies of war, disease, poverty, discrimination, exploitation, forced displacement, forced military recruitment and ignorance. Proper investment in the well-being of children was a guarantee for a better future, and implementation of the obligations set out in the Convention would heal many of humanity's woes.

16. Morocco had been one of the first countries to sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child and had ratified its three optional protocols. Her country had enhanced its legislative and institutional framework to comply with its international obligations, including through a national mechanism for the redress and monitoring of children's rights established under the National Human Rights Council, an independent national institution in full conformity with the Paris Principles. A pan-African campaign for “African Cities without Street Children” had been launched in Marrakech in November 2018. Its goal was to mobilize as many cities, territories and actors as possible at all levels of Government and to put child-related issues at the heart of decentralization policies. African cities and urban communities should be at the forefront of the efforts to assist street children. It was time to act to protect the children of Africa so that the continent could achieve the potential of its people. The election of Morocco to the Bureau of the Executive Board of UNICEF was a testament to the firm commitment of her country to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child.

17. **Ms. Jeng** (Gambia) said that her country's long record as a signatory to almost all international conventions on children's rights was a demonstration of its recognition of the need for effective progress in their protection and promotion. The Gambia remained strongly committed to that progress, and in that regard, had passed legislation to ban child marriage and female genital mutilation in 2015 and 2016 respectively. A child protection strategy and a national social protection policy, the latter designed to reduce poverty and vulnerabilities, had also been adopted to strengthen the child protection system and to design key interventions to ensure that no child was left behind. The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare had also been established with a special mandate to promote and protect the rights and welfare of children. The Government had established severe penalties for perpetrators of sexual violence against children and had banned corporal punishment in schools.

18. The 1997 Children's Act of the Gambia had enhanced the protection of children's rights, and the Government continued to provide free basic and secondary education for children, with special emphasis on the education of the girl child. Policies had been developed to ensure that the victims of early marriage and teenage pregnancy were re-enrolled in school and reintegrated into society. Despite remarkable progress, the Gambia still faced challenges relating to the full protection of children, including child labour and child begging. The minimum employment age had been

set at 16, and exploitative or hazardous work and work that interfered with the education of children under that age was prohibited. Nevertheless, some children were still subject to hard labour and were working on farms, in the lumber industry, as masons and as street vendors. Her Government reaffirmed its commitment to prioritizing the protection of children's rights in line with internationally agreed goals.

19. **Ms. González López** (El Salvador) said that, since her country had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, reforms had been made to its internal regulatory framework to meet international commitments for the well-being of children and adolescents. Over one third of the population of El Salvador consisted of children and adolescents, and of those, almost half were of preschool age. Her Government was developing an integrated early childhood policy entitled "Crecer Juntos" (grow together), modelled after other successful programmes in Latin America and with the help of international partners, to provide appropriate care for children through all phases of their early years. An early childhood office was being created to bring all branches of government related to children and adolescents under one umbrella, including with regard to health, education and culture. Her delegation looked forward to the support of the United Nations system and of other countries to achieve its objective of ensuring optimal early childhood development, which should tie in with the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4, target 2.

20. In late 2019, a programme to promote childhood development through sport would be launched with a view to creating a soccer schools in each of the 262 municipalities in the country. The schools would focus on sport, on the teaching of values such as discipline and effort, and on efforts to combat social exclusion, seeking to eradicate violence and transform the country from within each community.

21. Member States from the Latin American and Caribbean Group would sponsor a resolution on the rights of the child, specifically on children without parental care, and she urged all Member States to participate constructively in the adoption of that resolution for the good of children and adolescents. El Salvador was adapting its national legislation to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and had taken concrete steps to move towards a model of comprehensive protection for children and adolescents.

22. **Ms. Mehdiyeva** (Azerbaijan) said that the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the

Rights of the Child was approaching, and the best way to mark that milestone was to accelerate implementation and speed up collective efforts for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, which were inextricably linked to human and children's rights. Despite encouraging improvements in the well-being of children noted in the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on children (A/74/240), millions of children continued to face challenges. The dramatic increase in the number of child casualties in armed conflicts was unacceptable and it was regrettable that basic tenets of international humanitarian and human rights law were being disregarded by some State actors, including in her country's region.

23. Her Government had made consistent efforts to eradicate poverty and improve the well-being of the population, with positive results. During the 2018–2019 academic year, 75 per cent of children aged 5 years had been enrolled in preschool. Children with special needs, refugees and internally displaced persons received free medical care and free education at State schools or universities. Graduates of State-run child-care institutions received apartments and a social allowance along with full State support for rehabilitation and reintegration under the oversight of the Ministry of Education. Under a programme to address the social issues of children from low-income families and children with disabilities, new day care centres had been built, community-based rehabilitation centres for children with disabilities had been opened and social services centres had been established, benefiting approximately 5,000 children.

24. The State Programme on Development of Inclusive Education in Azerbaijan Republic for 2018–2024 had been adopted in 2017. In 2018, a joint study on knowledge, attitudes and practices towards children with disabilities had been carried out by the Ministry of Education and the UNICEF country office with a view to gaining a better understanding of societal attitudes to children with disabilities and to offer recommendations to support a transition in the education system from a medical approach to an inclusive, social approach. Lastly, in 2019, a joint European Union-UNICEF programme had been launched to provide comprehensive community-based support for Azerbaijani children and young people through community-based organizations, the modelling of social protection and inclusion services and programmes and the establishment of national standards across several sectors. Her country's main objective was to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all children.

25. **Mr. Worku** (Ethiopia) said that today's child-rearing decisions played a vital role in humanity's collective future, and the promotion and protection of children's rights remained crucial. To that end, Ethiopia had reduced child mortality and expanded children's access to school and was providing access to safe water and nutritious food and protecting children from violence, early and forced marriage and labour, through legislative, institutional and administrative measures.

26. His country's Constitution enshrined the right of children to life, education and health, and to protection from exploitative practices, corporal punishment and cruel and inhuman treatment in schools and other institutions. Significant legal reforms had been undertaken to harmonize national laws with international human rights instruments relevant to the protection of the rights and welfare of children. Through the 2017 National Children's Policy, a revised proclamation and a national action plan had been laid out with strategies to protect children from labour exploitation and sexual violence. A rehabilitation programme for victims of sexual and psychological violence had been created, with one-stop centres and safe houses to ensure victims' full recovery.

27. In the light of his country's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Government of Ethiopia had raised public awareness and delivered training on its implementation with a view to changing and reducing the impacts of harmful societal perceptions of persons with disabilities. The Convention had been translated into five local languages and disseminated to the public and a national council had been established to oversee its implementation.

28. With regard to child stunting due to malnutrition, the prevalence had decreased from 58 per cent in 2000 to 38 per cent in 2016 in the affected areas of Ethiopia, and the mortality rate in children under 5 years of age had decreased since 2014. Nevertheless, given the magnitude of the problem, further collaborative effort was still required.

29. **Ms. Uthaiwan** (Thailand) said that, as a State party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its three optional protocols, Thailand reaffirmed its commitment to the fulfilment of its obligations to promote and protect all aspects of children's rights through the holistic approach that had been used since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Her country had developed and implemented national policies and strategies to prevent and respond to violence against children and youth and, with the participation of schools and communities, a national strategy to promote and protect children and youth using online media, with a

particular focus on cyberbullying. A child support grant scheme had yielded positive results in 2015 and 2016 and would be expanded. The passing of the National Child and Youth Development Promotion Act was a reflection of progress on legislation; the Early Childhood Development Act would strengthen national coordination; and the participation of children and youth was being encouraged through child and youth councils.

30. Apart from having been instrumental in the successful elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis, the universal health coverage scheme in effect in the country continued to play a fundamental role in the promotion of healthy lives for all children, through services that included family planning, antenatal care, vaccination, disease screening and counselling.

31. Thailand was determined to promote education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, particularly among women and girls, while supporting vocational education, informal education and training in entrepreneurship and ICT skills to prepare children for the future. Thailand remained committed to cooperating to help children in disadvantaged and vulnerable situations worldwide, and had worked to ensure the access of migrant children to essential services, including birth registration, free compulsory education and basic health care. Thailand was working with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to establish the first-ever regional centre of excellence on children in armed conflict. As the world celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it was time to look ahead and step up action for even greater progress in achieving a better and more sustainable world for every child.

32. **Ms. Taradai** (Ukraine) said that the Government had recently launched the national action plan for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child for the period until 2021, which was designed, inter alia, to create conditions conducive to child development, ensure equal opportunities for all children, strengthen families and responsible parenthood, protect children from violence, create a child-friendly justice system, protect the rights of children in conflict zones and create safe spaces for children online. Ukraine had recently joined the pilot project of the Council of Europe to end online child sexual exploitation and abuse, and the national anti-bullying week, to be held later that month, would focus on the protection of children from cyberbullying and on public information events.

33. Ukrainian children continued to suffer the consequences of Russian aggression in parts of Donbas and temporarily occupied Crimea, and as a result they were deprived of their fundamental human rights. In 2019, UNICEF had confirmed that each escalation in hostilities in Donbas had threatened access to safe water and sanitation for 3.2 million people, including 500,000 children. Large areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions were contaminated by explosive remnants of war, which had resulted in more than 1,500 casualties of landmines and unexploded ordnance, including 119 children since 2014. Her delegation strongly condemned the widespread violations of international humanitarian law committed by the Russian occupation administration in the temporarily occupied Crimea. Children were becoming members of and were being drawn into the activities of the “Unarmiya” paramilitary movement, one of whose main goals was to prepare young people for conscription. Children should remain children, not become soldiers. Ukraine appreciated the long-standing cooperation with United Nations agencies to ensure the protection of children, in particular with UNICEF, and would remain a reliable partner in that regard.

34. **Mr. Kabba** (Sierra Leone) said that no child should be denied their fundamental rights as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols and all relevant international human rights instruments. As part of its national response, the Government had restructured or reorganized several institutions in order to more effectively monitor and coordinate children’s rights issues, and had adopted national strategies on, inter alia, persons with disabilities, the rights, welfare and education of children, human trafficking, domestic violence and sexual offences. It had also adopted policies on alternative care and free health care, a code of conduct for teachers, a national referral protocol for gender-based violence and initiatives for the prevention of early child marriage and teenage pregnancy. Despite many achievements, his country continued to grapple with challenges that included capacity-building within national institutions and finding the resources to effectively implement legislation, policies and strategies.

35. In keeping with its commitment to protecting the right of children to quality education, free education had been introduced at the primary and secondary school levels. Sustainable Development Goal 4 was achievable through the creation of child-friendly and gender- and disability-sensitive facilities to provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning for all. Children were central to the overall agenda of human

and social development. Their welfare must be promoted to ensure that they were able to achieve their full potential, and the community of nations must work together to accelerate the realization of a world fit for children.

36. **Mr. Djiguemde** (Burkina Faso) said that 54 per cent of his country’s population was made up of children. Thousands of students, of whom 56 per cent were girls and women, had taken part in various informal and professional training programmes thanks to reduced and subsidized training costs at professional training institutions. They had received training in market gardening, sewing, weaving, cattle fattening and domestic work. The implementation of the national action plan against the worst forms of child labour had resulted in the removal of 631 children from such employment, and 1,420 children had begun apprenticeship programmes. Education was the basis of the future of all nations and in that regard, Burkina Faso had achieved an increase in primary and secondary school enrolment rates. Several initiatives had been implemented to enable children affected by attacks by armed groups to take special examinations so as not to lose the school year.

37. Turning to climate change, he said that since the inclusion of environmental education in school curricula in 2011, children in his country had been taught to protect the environment and to keep their surroundings clean, enabling them to develop environmental awareness and feel that they were active participants in local environmental conservation.

38. Regarding social inclusion, actions taken to reduce social inequality and promote national solidarity with children included funds transfers to vulnerable rural households, integrated service delivery for orphans and other vulnerable children, and programmes to rehabilitate street children and support their reintegration into society. Legislation had been adopted to promote and strengthen children’s participation in decisions concerning them, to involve student groups in all aspects of school life, to create school clubs where students could express themselves, and to include the children’s parliament as a statutory participant in local and national consultation frameworks. Through those initiatives, children could participate in discussions on rights-related policies and programmes, make recommendations to the Government and monitor progress.

39. The national child protection system had been strengthened through the creation of a working group and child protection networks in all provinces; the training of child protection workers in case

management, mobility, child trafficking and violence against children; and the launch of a children's help line. Focus groups had been organized with each of thirteen regional children's parliaments to obtain their input on the analysis conducted in creating the national child protection strategy. A significant investment in a programme for the social inclusion of children with disabilities had been used to strengthen services, support families and provide specialized training to personnel.

40. Despite significant efforts and achievements in improving children's living conditions and protecting their rights, challenges persisted owing to insufficient resources and harmful traditional practices, such as early or forced child marriage, female genital mutilation and child labour. To address the challenges, the Government was strengthening the legislative and regulatory protection framework and adopting a national strategy and action plan for the protection and advancement of girls. Burkina Faso remained firmly committed to working for the effective promotion and protection of the rights of the child across all socioeconomic and political sectors in both urban and rural areas.

41. **Ms. Al Abri** (Oman) said that the national committee to monitor implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Oman had acceded in 1996, had been reconstituted in 2014. The 2014 Children's Act guaranteed the rights to life, protection from violence, education and health care and to an adequate standard of living that met the requirements of the child's physical, psychological and social development. The Act also enshrined the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, race or any other ground. All harmful practices related to early and forced marriage were prohibited. Child protection committees had been established to handle reports of violations of children's rights. A programme had been put in place to support family cohesion and raise awareness among couples preparing to marry of marital values and proper child-rearing.

42. Omani children had access to health-care services and treatment and all vaccinations were provided free of charge. Education was also provided free of charge in public schools from the first to the twelfth grades. Education was compulsory for both boys and girls up to the tenth grade. Efforts were under way to expand early childhood education; the enrolment rate in that sector had increased to just over 50 per cent in 2016/17, a handbook of standards for kindergartens had been published and an initiative had been launched to ensure the provision of preschool education in remote provinces that did not have any private schools.

43. A programme on national identity and global citizenship had been implemented for children and young people aged between 6 and 24 years with the aim of enhancing their sense of belonging and instilling in them a sense of responsibility. The Children First Association worked in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to ensure children's active participation in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

44. **Ms. Gebrekidan** (Eritrea) said that, despite much progress with the Sustainable Development Goals that related to children, much remained to be done. In its efforts to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Eritrea had conducted assessments on street children, female genital mutilation, child marriage and access to education, health care and nutrition. Child well-being campaigns on the rights and protection of children had engaged parents, community leaders, teachers and students. Malnutrition was being addressed through a steering committee on food and nutrition security that focused on nutrition for children under the age of 5 years and for pregnant and lactating mothers.

45. Both female genital mutilation and child marriage were illegal in Eritrea, where "Girls not brides", the African Union campaign to end child marriage, had been launched in June of 2016, followed by workshops conducted on that topic. Eritrea had also conducted national campaigns for measles and rubella immunization and vitamin A supplementation. Eritrea had been expanding access to basic education, and its Education Sector Plan 2018–2022 was focused on improving quality learning and on inclusivity, including access to education for children with disabilities and education in the mother tongue. In that regard, training programmes for teachers were being deployed in several languages and the range of books available in all Eritrean languages was being expanded. Addressing the issue of children who were not in school was one of the country's highest priorities. She reaffirmed her country's commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of children.

46. **Mr. Bermúdez Álvarez** (Uruguay) said that Uruguay had long been a regional and global leader in the promotion and protection of children's rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols constituted the international normative framework for protecting children and ensuring their well-being, in which children were recognized as human beings with a set of rights instead of passive objects requiring protection.

47. The theme of children without parental care was particularly important. Children were one of the most

vulnerable groups in society and must be protected by public policy. In Uruguay, the parliament had adopted a code on childhood and adolescence, which established that all children and adolescents enjoyed human rights and that those rights must be exercised in accordance with their stage of development. A national plan for early childhood, childhood and adolescence for the period 2016–2020 had also been drafted in a process involving State institutions, civil society, political parties, academia, the United Nations system and children and adolescents, who had been asked for their opinions during the process.

48. Combating child poverty was essential, as poverty prevented children from enjoying childhood and harmed their mental, physical and emotional health, while also exposing them to exploitation, abuse and violence. Uruguay had implemented targeted anti-poverty policies, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals, which had reversed the negative trend that had begun at the turn of the century in that regard. The inclusion of children's issues as a cross-cutting theme in State initiatives had led to significant progress in eradicating poverty and malnutrition, while improving maternal health and reducing child mortality.

49. Uruguay believed that the rights of children must be acknowledged and guaranteed in all realms of State activity. His country was especially concerned by the sexual exploitation of children, child prostitution and child pornography and condemned in the strongest terms all violence, exploitation and abuse of children. The situation of children living in areas of armed conflict was also of particular concern. Uruguay would continue to support the work of UNICEF and that of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children. His delegation called for the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols to be universally ratified and fully implemented.

50. **Mr. Lam Padilla** (Guatemala) said that, unless countries could make more rapid progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, 70 million children under the age of 5 years would die before 2030. Given its geographic location in the path of migration flows heading north and its economic and institutional challenges, like other countries in the region, Guatemala was highly vulnerable to the problem of trafficking in persons. As migration flows had intensified in recent years, Guatemala had become an origin, transit and destination country for international trafficking, which had led to the spread of that criminal practice at the national level. Of particular concern was the scourge of

trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, which especially affected women, children and adolescents. Physical and psychological trauma, sexually-transmitted diseases, chronic malnutrition, social isolation, drug addiction, and even suicide or death at the hands of traffickers or their clients were among the devastating effects of that crime. Trafficking was a form of modern slavery and the international community must remain resolute in its joint efforts to eradicate it.

51. Despite the efforts of the international community, children continued to be abused in situations of armed conflict, a serious violation of the rights of the most vulnerable. Efforts must be redoubled to eradicate that scourge and child protection and participation should be an integral part of conflict prevention and resolution strategies to achieve sustainable peace.

52. Guatemala had signed the Safe Schools Declaration in May 2019 and, during the seventy-fourth General Assembly, had participated in a side event organized by Save the Children that focused on the need to include a gender perspective in national budgets and to invest in women and girls. The alignment of national priorities with the 2030 Agenda would strengthen joint efforts to eradicate violence against children.

53. **Ms. Guinhouya** (Togo) said that child protection was enshrined in his country's Constitution, as respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms and the dignity of persons were prerequisites for the sustainable human development of all citizens. The right of children to education, health, and protection against all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation was central to that development. Togo had worked with technical and financial partners to reform its legal framework and create the health, economic, cultural and social conditions required to promote and protect the rights of the child. A child protection system had been created and a new national policy on the well-being of the child had been drafted and was being finalized, which, with participation from local communities, should contribute to finding solutions to the problems faced by vulnerable children.

54. Togo continued to implement its policy of free primary education launched in 2008, which had resulted in an increase in school enrolment, particularly among girls. Through its education strategy 2014–2025, Togo expected to achieve universal primary education by 2022 and extend pre-school education to poor and rural areas, with the ultimate goal of improving literacy rates.

55. Lack of adequate nutrition was an important reason for dropping out of school, particularly in rural areas, and the Government had launched a programme of school cafeterias that enabled pre-school and primary

students, in particular the most disadvantaged, to have at least one meal per day. The programme was expected to improve school attendance and performance. A health insurance programme (School Assur) was also being deployed through schools and was benefiting more than two million schoolchildren. Despite progress in the promotion of the rights of children, much remained to be done to ensure the well-being of children and a quality education for all children.

56. **Mr. Kimpolo** (Congo) said that his Government had prioritized the rights of the child in its social policies and had implemented a coordinating mechanism for child protection and, since 2015, a strategic framework to strengthen the national child protection system. The framework was organized around the development of an integrated child protection system; the creation and implementation of mechanisms for the effective coordination and monitoring of child protection initiatives; and the promotion of positive social change.

57. Legislation linked to children's rights had been enacted, which, inter alia, included the Family Code, the Citizenship Code, the Labour Code, which set a minimum working age, the Child Protection Act, an Act for the protection and promotion of persons with disabilities, and an Act for families and children in difficulty. Government action for child welfare was based on that legislation and on the 2015 Constitution.

58. The Congo was also improving social initiatives for child protection in the context of its national social action policy 2017–2021. Programmes to address the issues of children in armed conflict, violence against children, and child sexual exploitation and assault were being implemented in keeping with General Assembly resolution 73/585 on the rights of the child. The Child Protection Act provided that all children were equal in rights and duties irrespective of their origin, citizenship, sex, creed or fortune, and that all children had the right to an education that would enable them to achieve their full potential and the right to live free from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

59. **Mr. Thomas** (Antigua and Barbuda) said that concern over children's rights should not be limited to the plight of today's children but should also consider the children of the future. As the most vulnerable citizens, children were suffering from the health-related impacts of climate change, a phenomenon which threatened their life and liberty. Children were too small to cope, too poor to adapt, too simple to plan and too weak to protect themselves. Not only were children afflicted by child labour, abuse and hunger, they also suffered from obesity and from asthma and health issues

caused by air pollution from nations that had decided to put wealth before health.

60. Universal education and health care were a right for every child in Antigua and Barbuda and children were protected by a social safety net which included a guarantee of nutritional meals at school. His country's environmental laws provided safeguards for children, including laws to eliminate single-use plastics and provide safe water and renewable energy for schools. He encouraged Member States to re-examine their national policies and commitments regarding the world that would be left to the children of the present and the future. The rights of the child did not end with a voice in the current climate debates, and children should continue to have both a voice and a choice in the future.

61. **Ms. Stankiewicz Von Ernst** (Iceland) said that her Government placed special emphasis on children's affairs and that the Ministry for Social Affairs and Children had recently begun work on a policy that would advance children's issues in society. The Government, with the collaboration of the Ministry, parliament and municipalities, aimed to review the Child Protection Act, the social framework for children's affairs, and all services for children, with a view to placing the child and the family at the centre of those services. To protect children from violence, a priority for the Government, work had started on a proposed information centre for tackling violence against children, which would coordinate research and statistics and share the information with government agencies and non-governmental organizations. The Children's House had been developed over the previous three decades as a one-stop shop to support child victims of sexual or other serious violence. It provided a child-friendly, multi-agency response to child abuse using a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to investigate cases and dispense therapeutic services to victims. The model had been copied in approximately 20 countries.

62. In many parts of the world, including Iceland, children and youth had been protesting government inaction on the climate crisis, displaying strong concern regarding a situation created by past generations. It was the duty of those in power to listen. Similarly, it was crucial for young people to be included in the decision-making process. Her Government had recently approved a proposal designed to increase the participation of children in the formulation of policies and to ensure that major decisions and legislative proposals were reviewed for their impact on children and their rights. Iceland also had a youth council for the Sustainable Development Goals, which provided a platform for youth to express their voice to policy-makers. Young people had the right to be heard, and child participation was crucial for the

successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The promotion and protection of children's rights was central for sustainable development and the international community must continue to make universal progress on children's rights and protection to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Investing in children throughout their journey to adulthood was a moral duty and an essential investment in a better present and future for all.

63. **Mr. Espiritu** (Sovereign Order of Malta) said that the Order was active in 120 countries, providing medical, humanitarian and social assistance, with the welfare of children as one of its foremost priorities. Children, including those who were unaccompanied or had been separated from the family, made up more than half of the world's 65 million displaced persons, and their welfare was a particular concern. In Turkey, where half of the 2.7 million Syrian refugees were children, the Order maintained an orphanage for unaccompanied minors, two schools and a rehabilitation centre for children with disabilities. It supported paediatric hospitals and mobile medical units serving refugee children, including 2,400 newborns, in Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Northern Syria, and managed 140 facilities for 44,000 refugees in Germany. In France, the Order provided language classes to 800 children per year and in South Sudan, it served 3,000 meals a day to displaced children and provided child-friendly spaces.

64. Undernourishment remained a focus of its programmes, and the facilities of the Order provided nutritional support in Togo, Uganda and Guatemala. There were malnutrition units in many of its hospitals worldwide, and in remote areas such as parts of Togo and Benin, nutrition nurses travelled to treat undernourished children where they lived. The Order also provided educational programmes for the children of marginalized communities, such as the Roma in eastern Slovakia. With a focus on sick children and children with disabilities, the medical facilities of the Order provided medical services for mothers and children at health centres in Albania, Benin, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Lebanon, Madagascar, Tanzania and Timor Leste, and in Bethlehem in the West Bank. He reaffirmed the commitment of the Order to promoting the right of the hungry child to food, the sick child to health and the displaced or abandoned child to shelter and protection.

65. **Ms. Deer** (International Committee of the Red Cross) said that the widespread trend of selective implementation of the law was worrying for a variety of reasons, but primarily in connection with national borders or security issues, particularly in the case of children associated with groups designated as terrorist.

Children born to migrants or violent extremists were treated as exceptional cases to whom the law did not apply.

66. Millions of children in conflict zones faced discrimination, ostracization and stigmatization. Three policies of particular concern were discrimination against children based on age in a manner inconsistent with international law; age-based separation from the family and age-based decisions against returning them to their countries of origin; and the sentencing of extremely young children associated with armed groups based on an age of criminal responsibility that fell below international standards, at times for mere association with an armed group. Her delegation reaffirmed that all children were entitled to rights and protection without distinction based on age, gender, religion or association with an armed group designated as a terrorist group.

67. The International Committee of the Red Cross called on States to enforce three key standards without distinction or exception. Those standards were the best interest of the child, the right of children not to be separated from their parents against their will and the obligation to reintegrate children who had participated in an armed conflict. In the event of the repatriation of foreign fighters, she urged States to repatriate children with their parents with full and informed consent, even in cases where judicial proceedings were pending for the parents in the country of return, and with due respect for the principle of non-refoulement. Children must be considered first and foremost as victims, even children associated with armed groups designated as terrorist. The Committee was available to provide policy and legal guidance to States in defining policies and approach with regard to the rights of children in situations of armed conflict.

Agenda item 26: Advancement of women (*continued*)

(a) **Advancement of women** (*continued*) ([A/74/38](#), [A/74/137](#), [A/74/224](#) and [A/74/235](#))

(b) **Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly** (*continued*) ([A/74/220](#) and [A/74/222](#))

68. **Mr. Teeramungcalanon** (Thailand) said that, as the advancement of women and gender equality lay at the heart of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, sustainable development would only be achieved when women enjoyed equal rights and opportunities. It was laudable that, through the United Nations System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, a greater number of women than ever were in leadership roles in peacekeeping operations and that women's empowerment was a top

priority. Nevertheless, overall progress on gender parity worldwide had been slow and commitments for the empowerment of women at the national, regional and international levels must be implemented more comprehensively and systematically.

69. Progress on gender equality in Thailand had been articulated through the incorporation of gender-responsive budgeting and policies in the public health and criminal justice systems, and through the promotion and protection of human rights, with a particular focus on ending violence against women and on promoting the participation and empowerment of women and girls in all spheres. Women in Thailand had achieved impressive global rankings in corporate leadership. They made up more than 64 per cent of the workforce and were the drivers of many companies and industries. Thailand ranked first in the world for women's enrolment in higher education, and in the recent general elections, 81 of the 500 parliamentarians elected had been women. Thailand was committed to stepping up efforts even further to expand women's participation in politics and in decision-making at all levels.

70. Thailand had promoted access to affordable, quality universal health care. To truly leave no one behind, universal health coverage should address the physical and mental health needs of all, including women and girls. The celebration of anniversaries of important multilateral agreements on the rights of women was an opportunity for crucial reflection on progress made and on challenges that remained. He was one of the 2 million advocates of the HeForShe campaign, and all must do their part as agents of change and take a stand against gender-based violence and discrimination.

71. **Ms. Al Abri** (Oman) said that men and women in her country enjoyed the same rights, including the rights to health care and education, work and decision-making, all of which were enshrined in the Basic Law of the State. The Labour Law of 2003 prohibited the employment of women in jobs that were detrimental to health and in hard labour. Like their male counterparts, women had the right to own and dispose of property.

72. Perceptions of women in Omani society had shifted as a result of women's education and representation in the workplace. As a result of equal access to higher education and efforts to encourage women to pursue different areas of specialization, women held high-level positions in the private and public sectors throughout Oman, accounting for a significant proportion of the labour force across various professions. After ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against

Women, Oman had established a Committee to Monitor Implementation of the Convention in the Sultanate. Her Government had been keenly concerned with the conditions of rural women and supported their various roles, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy.

73. Under Omani law, women were entitled to vote and stand for election without discriminatory conditions or hindrances. Women held ministerial, ambassadorial and other senior positions in Government, the civil service, and the public and private sectors, in addition to judicial appointments. The participation of women in her country's comprehensive development process was not a choice but rather a necessary acknowledgement of their rightful place in society.

74. **Ms. Pejanović Đurišić** (Montenegro) said that numerous activities had been undertaken in Montenegro for the political and economic empowerment of women and to combat violence against women and girls. Legislative and institutional frameworks had been adopted, as had a programme for the implementation of the action plan for achieving gender equality for the period 2019–2020. Recommendations received from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women were being incorporated into State structures, including those aimed at enhancing the implementation of legislation on gender equality, providing access to justice and legislation for all and prohibiting gender-based discrimination and violence. Affirmative action initiatives had resulted in the increased participation of women in local and national parliaments, and a women's political network established in 2017 with members from Government and interest groups had prepared legislative amendments to achieve the goal of having women account for at least 40 per cent of members of Parliament by 2020.

75. Increasing women's employment and eliminating gender-based labour discrimination were crucial preconditions for ensuring gender equality, and in that regard, women in Montenegro were entitled to one year of paid maternity leave. Furthermore, the action plan for the strategy for women's entrepreneurship 2015–2020 and local action plans for gender equality had enhanced the economic empowerment of women, providing broader and easier access to lines of credit and implementing the use of gender-sensitive budgeting to support women's entrepreneurship. Notably, greater attention had been paid to improvements in the status of rural, elderly and unemployed women, women with disabilities and Roma and Egyptian women. Numerous education centres had been put in place to promote equal access to the labour market and the acquisition of appropriate skills, in particular in the field of ICT.

76. Violence against women had devastating consequences on women's participation in society. Montenegro had strengthened its normative and institutional frameworks to provide more efficient protection for victims of domestic violence. Despite the progress made, violence against women and children still represented one of the most serious challenges in the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls in Montenegro. Her Government was working on changing the penal policy and on enhanced implementation and coordination between Government sectors to provide women with timely and proper protection through a multidisciplinary response. Montenegro remained committed to the effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the rights of women and girls, which had positive catalytic implications for development across the whole of society. The diplomatic staff of Montenegro, all women, was a demonstration of her country's level of commitment to contributing to the elimination of stereotypes which were often associated with the region.

77. **Mr. Monyane** (Lesotho) said that the Beijing platform of action was a powerful tool for gender empowerment and the equality of women. His Government had put in place legislative, administrative and pragmatic measures geared towards ensuring the equal representation of men and women in all Government structures, and it was a testament to the success of those measures that the chief justice, auditor general and governor of the central bank were all women. However, Lesotho faced major challenges, including economic underdevelopment and challenges related to culture and religion. Lesotho was a patriarchal society in which economic and property relations were dominated by males. Male dominance and economic underdevelopment created a breeding ground for domestic violence involving physical, sexual and emotional abuse. The rippling effects of the global economic and financial crisis along with chronic droughts, which signaled the unfolding impacts of climate change, had intensified the plight of young persons, including women and girls.

78. In that context, the Government had put in place legislation and other interventions to promote gender equality, including the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act of 2006, which abolished the minority status of women and empowered them by granting them equal access to economic resources and facilities. The 2003 gender and development policy sought to remove social and cultural barriers with respect to girls' and boys' education and provided for gender-sensitive

career guidance at all levels. The Land Act 2010, one of whose objectives was to enhance the property rights of women, had abolished the minority status of women in the ownership of land and landed property. Lesotho would continue making every effort to ensure respect for the rights of women.

79. **Ms. Bertrand** (France) said that almost 25 years after the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, held in Beijing, no country had established genuine equality between men and women, and in many regions of the world, women's rights had regressed and inequality had increased. Determined to eliminate that inequality, France had established an international strategy for gender equality in 2018. The issue was also a priority in its work at the Security Council under the women, peace and security agenda item, and in Europe, France was promoting the universal adoption of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. During the 2019 Group of Seven Summit, France had supported the adoption of a joint declaration to make gender equality a major global cause and the adoption of the Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality, whose goal was to eliminate discriminatory legislation that held women back.

80. France would continue to fight for gender equality, which must be based on the three pillars of emancipation, protection and genuine equality for women. In support of that effort, in July 2020, France and Mexico would co-host the Generation Equality Forum in Paris, convened by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). If equality were to be achieved, all must act to protect the rights of women and their sexual and reproductive health, to ensure their access to property ownership, to promote the education of women and girls, to encourage their access to the new digital economy and to acknowledge their vital role in the transition to a greener world. Nationally and internationally, France would continue to act for the promotion of gender equality.

81. **Mr. Beresford-Hill** (Sovereign Order of Malta) said that the education of girls and the reintegration of victims of sexual and gender-based violence was one of the keys to achieving equality and women's empowerment. In order to further that goal, the order of Malta worked with local, regional, national and international organizations in more than 120 nations to deliver health care, first-aid services, rehabilitation, education and support, for refugees, migrants and the victims of human trafficking and involuntary transhumance. In 2019, the Order had appointed two

ambassadors in Geneva and one in Nairobi to help combat human trafficking, which disproportionately affected women and girls. The organization had established a centre in Lagos, Nigeria to protect and rehabilitate victims of forced prostitution, sexual and gender-based violence and human trafficking. In the southern Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Order and Malteser International had created several safe havens for victims of assault, rape and other types of violence, providing psychological and medical treatment, including medication to reduce the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

82. The risk of gender-based violence increased in times of unrest, and migrant and refugee women and girls were more vulnerable to human trafficking. Lack of a support system, whether for physical health, mental health or legal security, led to a systematic continuance of the abuses, and the Order was working to solve that problem at its root, including through the inauguration of a youth hostel for girls in India that was bringing secondary education to over 100 abused young women annually.

83. Sexual assault survivors were often ostracized by their own families on account of stigma. The Order had therefore established community outreach centres in high-risk areas where counsellors talked to the community about rape and violence in an attempt to convince the community to embrace victims with compassion rather than punish them by exclusion. The order of Malta looked forward to continuing to serve and offer a voice for those who were left behind.

84. **Mr. Cognac** (International Labour Organization) said that in the years since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, considerable progress had been achieved on gender parity, schooling and women's access to labour markets. Nevertheless, girls were still more likely than boys not to complete their basic education, and women, especially young women, were still struggling to find decent jobs, even when they had attained higher levels of education. There were more women at work, but they were disproportionately found in lower-skill occupations and still too rarely at the top of the corporate ladder.

85. Globally, women's unemployment stood at 5.4 per cent versus 4.7 per cent for men, but the real concern was that when women finally gained access to jobs, they faced discrimination, violence and harassment, despite the commitments made by leaders at the Beijing Conference to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, empower them and help them realize their full potential in society. Those commitments could

not be achieved while workplace violence and harassment continued.

86. At its centenary conference in June 2019, the International Labour Organization had adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and a related resolution on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work. At last, those unacceptable behaviours would be officially recognized as human rights violations, because for the first time in history, an international treaty recognized the right of all to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. The Convention also set out practical measures of relief for victims, flexible work arrangements, and awareness-raising. Under the Convention, Member States would implement relevant policies, strategies, and monitoring mechanisms, apply sanctions for perpetrators and provide support for victims. Awareness-raising on the issue of violence and harassment at work would help shape modern societies where women and men could work together, enhance social development and accelerate productivity. Several countries were preparing to ratify Convention No. 190 and his delegation encouraged all Governments to take the necessary steps for ratification. The International Labour Organization looked forward to working with the Third Committee to strengthen policies aimed at the advancement of women.

87. **Ms. Elliot** (World Food Programme), speaking also on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, said that gender equality and the empowerment of women were fundamental to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and of a world free from hunger and malnutrition. Nevertheless, hunger rates were on the rise, driven upward by the twin scourges of conflict and climate change. More than 820 million people still suffered from hunger, and the prevalence of food insecurity worldwide was higher among women than among men. If the Goals were to be achieved, action must be accelerated during the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals in order to reverse the trend of rising hunger, malnutrition and inequality. Only equal opportunities, equal access to resources, and an equal voice for women in decisions that shaped lives, households, communities and societies could bring about zero hunger.

88. Women comprised approximately 50 per cent of the agricultural workforce in developing countries and played a critical role in supporting food and nutrition security, and yet they were subject to systematic and systemic discrimination and exclusion. Those barriers directly impacted the health, well-being and economic

situation of women and their families, perpetuating cycles of poverty and hunger. It was notable that rural women experienced greater food insecurity than both rural men and their female counterparts in urban areas. Furthermore, the impact of climate change and shocks such as droughts and floods were not gender-neutral, as data gathered over 20 years in 188 countries had revealed that natural disasters and crop failures reduced the life expectancy of women significantly more than that of men. Analysis had also shown that improvements in women's status in society could mitigate excess mortality in women in emergency situations.

89. The World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and UN-Women were using a gender transformative approach to implement a joint programme for the economic empowerment of rural women, with support from Norway and Sweden. In the seven countries of implementation, women participants had increased their agricultural productivity and the nutrition of their families, and had received access to credit to start their own businesses and augment their income. The agencies also helped build the climate resilience of women and helped women manage the risks associated with natural disasters and agriculture through the use of climate-smart agricultural practices and technologies. The World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development remained committed to assisting Member States in their efforts to create a future where the Goals were achieved and no one was left behind.

90. **Mr. Gorman-Best** (International Organization for Migration) said that gender played a large part in shaping the experience of women migrants, who accounted for almost 50 per cent of migrants and were increasingly migrating as individuals. Women were economic decision-makers in the family, community and workplace, and they were emerging as key players in migration. Unfortunately, women and girl migrants were at greater risk of all forms of violence, and globally, nearly three quarters of the victims of trafficking were women and girls. Almost all victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation were female, as were 35 per cent of the victims of trafficking for forced labour. Despite those sobering statistics, progress had been made, as evidenced by current discussions on legal and policy frameworks and their implementation whereas a decade earlier the focus had still been on advocacy for recognition of the problem and for the adoption of such frameworks.

91. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) had learned from experience that action was

needed in three areas. First, work must be stepped up with Governments and civil society to better identify and protect victims. Since the mid-1990's, IOM had provided protection and assistance to over 100,000 victims of trafficking, half of whom were women and nearly a quarter of whom were girls. In the 2016–2018 period, women and girls trafficked for forced labour had accounted for 30 per cent of its case load.

92. Second, high-quality data on the association between migration and gender was needed. To that end, IOM had launched the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative in 2017, the world's first global data portal on human trafficking with primary data contributed by organizations around the world, providing data disaggregated by gender and age.

93. Third, much greater efforts must be made to mobilize consumers and private sector actors to prevent the occurrence of exploitation, keeping in mind the gendered nature of the link between migration and labour. In that regard, IOM had launched an online publication entitled "Remediation Guidelines for Victims of Exploitation in Extended Mineral Supply Chains". Aligned with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Guidelines provided a six-step operation process that companies could take when identifying victims of exploitation. IOM remained deeply committed to addressing the gender constraints that prevented migrant women and girls from realizing their full potential.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.