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Chair: Ms. Bailey (Vice-Chair) (Jamaica)
later: Ms. O’Hehir (Vice-Chair) (Australia)

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In the absence of Mr. Rai (Nepal), Ms. Bailey (Jamaica), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

General debate (continued)

1. **Mr. Braquetti** (Monaco) said that on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, as the Committee continued its discussions of essential reforms amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, it was more important than ever for the Committee to put people at the centre of its deliberations. Building back better meant building back greener. Monaco had been among the signatories to the Leaders' Pledge for Nature that had emerged from the summit on biodiversity held on 30 September 2020 on the margins of the high-level segment of the current session of the General Assembly. That Pledge had laid out principles for reversing biodiversity loss in the run-up to the two upcoming climate conference: the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Glasgow, United Kingdom, in November 2021; and the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Kunming, China, in May 2021.

2. The United Nations needed to be more inclusive, especially of women and young people. His Government was paying particular attention to the empowerment of women and the education of children during the lockdown necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of its conviction that global recovery would depend on equitable access for all to vaccines, Monaco had contributed \$550,000 to the Gavi Alliance. Given the uncertainty about how the pandemic would progress and when a vaccine might be available, Member States would need to exhibit exceptional solidarity and political will to overcome the crisis.

3. **Ms. Petrocelli Rojas** (Panama) said that the COVID-19 pandemic was putting progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals at risk and exacerbating inequalities between countries. In middle-income countries such as her own, job losses were expected to exceed those of the 2008–2009 crisis. The informal economy, which played such an important role in developing countries and was so important for women, had been severely curtailed. Her delegation placed particular emphasis on safe mobility between countries to revive the tourism industry. Global supply chains

needed to remain in operation, especially for food and medicine. The Regional Logistics Centre for Humanitarian Assistance, located in Panama, had already helped to distribute humanitarian assistance and medical supplies to 30 countries in the region.

4. While presenting many challenges, the COVID-19 crisis also offered the opportunity to build back better. The pandemic had demonstrated the need for increased investment in science, technology and innovation to overcome social inequalities. It had also highlighted the urgency of addressing climate change and biodiversity loss. Repositioning operational activities for development in the light of the post-COVID reality took on added importance as the international community embarked on the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals.

5. **Ms. Fisher-Tsin** (Israel) said that even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world had not been on track to reach many of the Sustainable Development Goals. Now, economies were in free fall, hundreds of millions of full-time jobs had been lost and children's education had been disrupted, with women and girls at particular risk. While those challenges were daunting, they also offered an opportunity for the United Nations to show itself at its best. The Committee should avoid revisiting old arguments and focus on real issues. While the previous session's decision on the revitalization of the work of the Committee had been a milestone, it had left certain issues unaddressed.

6. During the current session, her delegation would be introducing a draft resolution on entrepreneurship for sustainable development, which took on added importance in the light of the pandemic. Micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises were responsible for an overwhelming majority of jobs in developing countries. A stronger entrepreneurship sector would bring benefits not only to individuals, but also Governments and society as a whole. While the pandemic presented enormous challenges, it also served as a reminder of how connected the world was. Multilateral cooperation was more important than ever before.

7. **Mr. Vorshilov** (Mongolia) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated vulnerabilities and inequalities both within and among countries. The report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2020/57) had shown how the pandemic had shut down businesses and factories, impacted the livelihoods of half of the global workforce and disrupted global value and supply chains. Collective efforts and effective multilateral action were

needed to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the face of the crisis.

8. In his country, timely and targeted measures had resulted in zero local transmission, while economic stimulus packages worth over 10 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) had relieved the financial burden on people and businesses. Mongolia had recently acceded to the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement and would continue to work closely with its neighbours and partners to stimulate the economy and improve market access. His delegation looked forward to addressing the issues on the Committee's agenda for the current session, including development, investment, sustainable debt solutions, poverty eradication, environmental protection, climate change, disaster risk reduction, operational activities for development, and the special needs of Africa, the least developed countries, landlocked least developed countries and small island developing States. The draft resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system would be important for accelerating progress towards the Goals and promoting a stronger recovery.

9. The developing countries, especially those in special situations, were the most sensitive to the COVID-19 pandemic, making debt relief and sustainable investment all the more important. As a landlocked developing country, Mongolia welcomed the road map for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, and urged Member States, development partners and relevant stakeholders to continue to support the work of the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries.

10. **Mr. Davies** (Liberia) said that poverty eradication remained at the centre of the 2030 Agenda, with international cooperation and financing for development being indispensable. Without decisive action, COVID-19 had the potential to stall progress, leaving millions behind. Building back better would require cooperation among all stakeholders to support developing countries, and the least developed countries in particular. His delegation welcomed the Sustainable Development Goals Moment held by the Secretary-General on 18 September 2020, which had focused on a vision for the decade of action and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. It also commended the High-level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of

COVID-19 and Beyond, convened by the Secretary-General on 29 September 2020.

11. The COVID-19 pandemic had exposed structural fragilities around the world, and his country was no exception. His Government continued to implement programmes to combat inequality, gender imbalance and youth unemployment; provide equal opportunities in education, health, youth development and social protection; and promote an inclusive and accountable public sector. It was conducting an assessment of the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic with a view to making necessary adjustments in its national development plans, with a focus on inclusion, human capital development (particularly for youth), women's empowerment and poverty eradication.

12. **Mr. Koba** (Indonesia), speaking via video link, said that the international community needed to build back to a better normal in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Poverty eradication should remain at the heart of all recovery efforts. Long-term sustainable financing and multi-stakeholder partnerships were imperative. Alongside efforts to prevent the spread of the virus, fiscal stimulus packages were needed to mitigate its economic impact. Public health measures and socioeconomic responses went hand in hand.

13. Much progress had been made in repositioning the United Nations development system since the previous quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Nevertheless, there were mandates remaining to be fulfilled. Service delivery should be enhanced in line with national priorities and funding should be more flexible, with a focus on core resources. Cooperative and multilateral efforts would be needed to ensure safe, affordable and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, tests and treatments. The best way to develop resilience against future shocks was to redouble ongoing efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

14. **Mr Pérez Ayestarán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), in a pre-recorded video statement,* said that even amid the worst pandemic in 100 years, his country reiterated its commitment to the 2030 Agenda, with poverty eradication being the top priority. The principle of leaving no-one behind was reflected in all of his Government's national plans and social programmes. The COVID-19 crisis had exposed inequalities and was threatening to reverse development gains around the world. No one would overcome the crisis until all overcame it.

15. He called for the immediate withdrawal of all unilateral coercive economic measures, which – in addition to being in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, were particularly cruel during a crisis that made access to medicine and food all the more vital. Concessional financing should be made available without political strings attached. Debt service should be suspended for all developing countries without distinction, official development assistance (ODA) should be increased, and both North-South and South-South cooperation should be stepped up. International development cooperation could not be conducted on a one-size-fits-all basis; it must be tailored to national development plans. Corporate interests should not be allowed to prevail over people's interests.

16. **Mr. Mahmaminov** (Tajikistan) said that what had initially been a health-care crisis had been transformed into a global socioeconomic and financial crisis. His delegation welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General and the specialized agencies, foundations and programmes of the United Nations to provide assistance to tackle the humanitarian and socioeconomic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also commended the High-level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond, convened by the Secretary-General. Even under the current difficult circumstances, his delegation was committed to advancing its national development

strategy, which was fully consistent with the 2030 Agenda.

17. While the COVID-19 pandemic was rightly receiving focus, other threats continued to loom, notably climate change. Along with the other members of the Friends of Water Group, Tajikistan was promoting a global water agenda and would continue its initiatives to organize international platforms on that issue leading up to the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, scheduled to be held in New York from 22 to 24 March 2021. In the current session, his country and the Netherlands would be submitting to the Committee a draft resolution to finalize the modalities of that Conference, based on General Assembly resolution [73/226](#) and previously agreed language, and he looked forward to the Committee's engagement and support.

18. **Mr. Alhakbani** (Saudi Arabia) said that his country's Saudi Vision 2030 plan was an ambitious blueprint for development on which considerable progress had already been made. It included programmes to improve quality of life, develop and diversify the financial sector, improve health care and living standards and increase the involvement of the private sector in the provision of public services. The Kingdom was investing in human resources in the fields of health and education. It was also easing visa restrictions with a view to developing a tourism industry.

19. In addition to the perennial natural disasters and wars that set back the pace of development, the world was now dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, which would require a coordinated and cooperative international response. In its capacity as President of the Group of 20, Saudi Arabia had convened an extraordinary virtual summit on 26 March 2020 at which a number of unprecedented measures had been adopted, including pumping \$11 trillion into the global economy, expediting assistance to countries in need and suspending debt service payments for the poorest countries. In its national capacity, the Kingdom had contributed \$500 million to support international efforts to fight the effects of the pandemic.

20. **Mr. Gastorn** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that as the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals got under way, the COVID-19 pandemic had served to highlight existing global inequalities and the unevenness of progress on the 2030

* The statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was made through a pre-recorded video, under the extraordinary circumstances of the work of the Second Committee during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, in accordance with the approved organization of work of the Committee ([A/C.2/75/L.1](#)) and the conference room paper of the Bureau on the work of the Committee at the seventy-fifth session ([A/C.2/75/CRP.2](#)) and its reflection in summary records is solely for convenience and shall not set a precedent for any future session.

Agenda. Addressing the challenges to realization of the Goals would require that global partnerships be balanced against the increasing emphasis on domestic resource mobilization. An effective and progressive response was needed to address climate change while also mitigating its effects. The current session should also focus on poverty eradication and maintain the balance among the three dimensions of sustainable development. In the meantime, the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, the Secretary-General's humanitarian assistance package, the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and the World Bank's assistance package would all offer welcome relief to developing countries.

21. **Mr. Ismail** (South Africa) said that in addition to having already cost over a million lives, the COVID-19 pandemic was exposing infrastructure weaknesses in poor countries and plunging economies into turmoil. Coordinated multilateral action would be crucial to building back better, with due attention paid to gender equality. Africa's regional economic communities had launched a continent-wide strategy, with the African Union establishing a COVID-19 Response Fund and an African Medical Supplies Platform. He stressed that recovery efforts would emphasize innovative environment-friendly solutions in accordance with the proposed African Green Stimulus Programme.

22. The pandemic called for a multilateral response that included scaled-up financial, technological and capacity-building support for large-scale infrastructure projects. Financing should take the form of grants rather than commercial loans, which often came with conditionalities and co-financing ratios that effectively excluded developing countries and deepened the debt trap. Financing for women-run businesses would be particularly crucial.

23. Domestically, his Government had introduced an economic package worth over \$30 billion to counter the effects of the pandemic on the national economy, including unemployment insurance and loan guarantees to provide relief to small and medium-sized businesses. No effort had been spared to protect the most vulnerable citizens. He also wished to remind the Committee of the devastating drain of domestic resources caused by illicit financial flows and expressed his delegation's support for the recommendations of the High-level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda.

24. **Mr. Budhu** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that in his country, the COVID-19 pandemic had brought about a multilayered crisis comprising a public health emergency

and pervasive socioeconomic disruptions that would have far-reaching consequences for sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda should serve as the global blueprint for building back better, with a focus on innovative response mechanisms, strengthened financial instruments and scaled-up public-private partnerships and investments. Unfortunately, many small island developing States such as his own were at risk of being denied access to critical recovery support and concessional financing because of the antiquated measure of eligibility based on per capita income. Trinidad and Tobago echoed the call made by Alliance of Small Island States for a small island developing States compact to create tailored measures based on a multidimensional vulnerability index that accurately reflected their special development case.

25. The Committee's deliberations on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review would be of paramount importance in scaling up United Nations support for Governments responding to the pandemic. The United Nations development system should not use a one-size-fits-all model, but rather a multidimensional approach based on specific needs that ensured national ownership. The pandemic had made the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement all the more relevant. Along with the other Caribbean States, his country had been forced to confront COVID-19 during a worse than usual hurricane season. That presented special challenges to recovery, but also created an opportunity for new approaches to building resilience, reducing disaster risk and mitigating climate change impacts. His country had just presented its first voluntary national review to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July 2020, in the course of which it had highlighted the measures it had taken to minimize economic contraction, maintain critical activities and ensure the health and well-being of its citizens.

26. **Mr. Caballero Gennari** (Paraguay) said that even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it been acknowledged by the international community that the first five years of efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda had been insufficient; that had been one of the motivations for launching the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals. As the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Goals had shown, the COVID-19 pandemic threatened to slow progress even further. The international community needed to seize the moment to get back on track to deliver on the promises of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. His Government had launched several initiatives that

prioritized poverty eradication and protection of the most vulnerable and was grateful for the support it had received from friendly countries and international organizations. Continued efforts to realize the Goals, maintain the international trading system and keep international supply chains operational would be crucial to recovery.

27. His delegation urged Member States not to overlook other challenges to development, most notably climate change, which was a matter of particular concern. Paraguay had endorsed the Leaders' Pledge for Nature and, as a landlocked developing country, had endorsed the conclusions of the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 (A/74/113).

28. **Ms. Mudallali** (Lebanon) said that the current crisis had already cost more than a million lives, and was expected to push over 70 million people back into extreme poverty, eliminate 500 million jobs and cause 132 million to suffer from undernourishment in 2020. At the outset of the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals, innovative and inclusive policy options were needed to address liquidity shortages, avert a potential debt crisis, expand social protection and stop illicit financial flows. The international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society would be key partners in creating solutions based on solidarity, responsibility and ethics.

29. On 4 August 2020, her country's resilience had been put to the test yet again by a horrific explosion in the capital Beirut that the World Bank estimated would end up resulting in material losses of \$4.5 billion. She expressed appreciation for the swift support provided by the United Nations flash appeal and by international partners and friends but cautioned that further resource mobilization would be needed for a full recovery. Even prior to the explosion, her country had been facing a socioeconomic crisis exacerbated by the conflict in Syria and the COVID-19 pandemic. Lebanon hosted the highest number refugees per capita of any country in the world; if it were to continue to provide that global public good, it would need highly concessional loans and grants to support its overburdened infrastructure. In April 2020, Lebanon had adopted a national recovery plan that included expanded exercise of its sovereign right to exploit its oil and gas resources. In May 2020, it had launched discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a comprehensive programme of assistance.

30. Forecasts suggested that the Arab region in particular was not on track to achieve the Goals by 2030, and Lebanon was no exception. One measure that could help would be to reduce the cost of remittances, which according to IMF accounted for 14 per cent of GDP of conflict-affected States in the region, but had been drastically reduced because of the pandemic. The international community should mobilize all available means to implement the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up. In particular, she called for expansion of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative. The United Nations development system needed to be provided with adequate capacities to address global pandemics and disasters, as well as to implement sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery programmes based on clear priorities. Her delegation urged constructive engagement in the negotiations related to the draft resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Lastly, she urged member States once again to adopt the annual resolution on the oil slick on Lebanese shores.

31. **Mr. Carazo** (Costa Rica) said that the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic had hit the most vulnerable groups the hardest, had laid bare structural gaps in their political, economic and social systems and had widened the inequalities between and within countries. Digital technology needed to be harnessed to accelerate a green recovery and promote the orange economy. His Government was investing in education in order to promote science, technology and innovation, and had launched a COVID-19 knowledge repository in conjunction with the World Health Organization (WHO).

32. A sustainable recovery should include efforts to steer away from fossil fuels and meet the goal of keeping the global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Exploitation of resources needed to be environmentally sound. His country was taking measures to promote sustainable land use and would set aside 30 per cent of its marine areas for preservation by 2030. Costa Rica had endorsed the Leaders' Pledge for Nature.

33. He stressed that decentralization was essential for creating inclusive and sustainable societies. The international community should promote conditions conducive to implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework, combined with ambitious

biodiversity targets. That meant creating the necessary fiscal space by providing debt relief, ensuring financial flows and delivering on ODA commitments. Due consideration should be given to the multidimensional nature of poverty and development, so that each country's individual needs and potential were taken into account. On 25 September 2020, Costa Rica had presented a proposal for a COVID-19 economic relief fund that included long-term concessional loans for developing countries at fixed rates. The international community needed to maintain a clear vision of the investment needed to meet the Sustainable Development Goal targets.

34. **Mr. Al-dobhany** (Yemen) said that on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization's founding and the start of the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals, in addition to the usual list of items on its agenda, the Committee needed to address the socioeconomic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, which did not respect geographic or political boundaries and would require international cooperation to confront. The least developed countries, and especially conflict and post-conflict countries, were the most vulnerable and should be provided with facilitated access to information and vaccines.

35. His country was in the sixth year of the coup against the legitimate Government carried out by Houthi militias. The consequences for development had been devastating, resulting in widespread poverty and unemployment and putting a majority of the population on the brink of starvation. Even so, the Yemeni Government continued to do everything within its limited means to keep the Government and the economy running. The Central Bank had been moved from Sana'a to the temporary capital at Aden, and resources were being provided to the liberated governorates to pay Government salaries. Unfortunately, the militias continued to impose excessive taxes and use the proceeds to finance their war against the aspirations of the Yemeni people.

36. Lastly, he expressed his delegation's support for reform of the United Nations development system and urged United Nations agencies to incorporate a development component into humanitarian assistance programmes with a view to reducing dependence and increasing self-reliance.

37. *Ms. O'Hehir (Australia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

38. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that her country had been quick to take measures to address the COVID-19 outbreak, including switching over to remote learning without any interruption in children's education. Qatar had provided medical assistance to some 78 States and had made contributions of \$20 million to the Gavi Alliance and \$10 million to WHO. The Qatar National Vision 2030 plan continued to serve as a solid national framework for sustainable development. Qatar had presented two voluntary national reviews to the high-level political forum and looked forward to presenting its third in 2021.

39. Her country would be hosting the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in January 2022. In 2018, Qatar had announced that it would be contributing multi-year unearmarked funding of \$500 million to support United Nations agencies, including \$20 million to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sustainable Development Goals accelerator labs. At the 2019 Climate Action Summit, Qatar had announced a contribution of \$100 million to help small island developing States address climate change, and the Qatar Fund for Development was working on a 10-year plan to translate its pledge into progress on the ground. Even as it continued to deal with the unjust and illegal siege imposed on it under specious pretexts, Qatar would engage in international cooperation to achieve the Goals.

40. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that even in the midst of exceptional circumstances, his country had presented its first voluntary national review to the high-level political forum during the 2020 session. His country's Syria 2030 strategy was an expression of national ownership of the 2030 Agenda. The international community should provide the Syrian Arab Republic with the development assistance it needed free of any attempts at politicization.

41. On 26 March 2020, the Secretary-General had appealed for the waiving of sanctions that could undermine countries' capacities to respond to the pandemic. The recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights (A/75/209) had detailed the impacts of such measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. On 23 March 2020, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had called for an easing of sanctions because of their impact on health care and human rights.

42. He wished once again to draw the Committee's attention to the importance of the annual resolution on the

permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources. His delegation looked forward to the forging of international partnerships to overcome impediments to development – including the new challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic – based on the principles of national sovereignty, international law and non-politicization.

43. **Ms. Supatashvili** (Georgia) said that with less than a decade left to implement the 2030 Agenda, the COVID-19 pandemic threatened to derail the progress made over the previous five years. The health, socioeconomic and humanitarian impacts of the crisis were hitting the most vulnerable populations the hardest. The Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 and the Initiative on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond could serve as valuable tools for shaping an international response.

44. Prior to the pandemic, Georgia had graduated from lower to upper middle-income status in the World Bank classifications, and in 2019 had achieved its lowest unemployment rate in almost two decades. Even though Georgia had been one of the success stories in containing the pandemic medically, its economic progress was being endangered by the crisis. Her Government had developed a national plan that struck a balance between protecting human lives and reducing economic impacts. Even in the midst of the crisis, her country had made sure to present its second voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in July 2020.

45. While COVID-19 posed the most immediate threat, climate change and the biodiversity crisis remained long-term issues that could not be ignored. The only road to building back better was through a green recovery rooted in the commitments of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and global biodiversity goals. Her country had therefore updated its intended nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. It had also established a Climate Change Council, put forward a Climate Action Plan 2021–2030 and set long-term carbon emissions targets for 2050. Furthermore, Georgia had deposited its ratification of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on 16 June 2020. She was sorry to note that inhabitants of the Russian-occupied regions of Georgia – including Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia – were prevented from

benefiting from her Government's measures and were being left behind because of the occupation.

46. **Ms. Vives Balmaña** (Andorra) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had added yet another pressing issue to a list that included climate change, poverty, biodiversity loss and food insecurity. The recovery period would provide an opportunity to restructure the relationship between economic development and the natural environment. Her delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [71/243](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system ([A/75/79-E/2020/55](#)).

47. Andorra had endorsed the Leaders' Pledge for Nature and had taken a number of measures to preserve its natural heritage, including adopting a national biodiversity strategy for the period 2016–2024 and taking part in the Pyrenean Climate Change Observatory. One of its intended nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement was a commitment to carbon neutrality by 2050. Her country was also in the process of enacting a circular economy law.

48. As the Secretary-General had noted in his policy brief on the impact of COVID-19 on food security, the pandemic was endangering food supplies to the point that lives were at risk. She hoped that the world food systems summit scheduled for 2021 would produce tangible measures to address that situation. Along with San Marino, Andorra had presented a proposal on best practices to minimize food waste on the occasion of the first International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste on 29 September 2020.

49. **Ms. Tshering** (Bhutan) said that as the world pinned its hopes on a COVID-19 vaccine, her delegation welcomed the United Nations policy brief on COVID-19 and universal health coverage, and called for diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines to be recognized as global public goods to which all should have equal access. In the meantime, the economic consequences of the pandemic continued to be most severe for the least developed countries such as her own. The tourism, construction and agriculture industries in Bhutan had all come to grinding halt; unemployment was rising and GDP growth falling. Her Government had introduced a number of fiscal measures to provide relief to the most vulnerable segments of society and had overhauled its National Development Plan to front load investments

geared towards revitalizing the rural economy and generating employment.

50. In its quest for new sources of reliable financing her Government had issued its first-ever sovereign bond, which had been oversubscribed, demonstrating that even a least developed country could use such tools to augment conventional sources of finance such as ODA and concessional loans. The technical support provided for that bond issue by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific was an example of the catalytic role that could be played by the United Nations development system. Bhutan would continue to support a reinvigorated resident coordinator system with revamped regional assets during the negotiations on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

51. The impact of the current crisis inevitably affected her country's anticipated transition out of the least developed country classification. Her Government's national development plan, which had originally been designed to address "last-mile" challenges to a smooth transition by 2023, had had to be recalibrated to address the immediate challenge of the pandemic. Similarly, the impact of the crisis on her country's implementation of the 2030 Agenda would have to be taken into account when Bhutan presented its second voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in July 2021. Lastly, she stressed the need not to overlook the climate crisis and threats to biodiversity in the run-up to the two climate-change conferences in Glasgow, United Kingdom and Kunming, China.

52. **Mr. Beleffi** (San Marino) said that the pandemic was creating not only a health crisis, but also a humanitarian and security crisis that had accentuated pre-existing structural problems within and among nations. Indeed, the pandemic was showing the fragility of a world with inadequate health systems, social protection gaps, structural inequalities and a climate crisis.

53. In responding to the health crisis, the United Nations was not only expanding the provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance but was also establishing instruments for a rapid response to the socioeconomic impacts. In that context, San Marino welcomed the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan of WHO, the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 and the establishment of the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. The United Nations should take the lead in a collective and multilateral response to the crisis.

54. While the crisis was endangering the progress made towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, it also offered a unique opportunity to pursue a transformative recovery that would ultimately make societies more inclusive and sustainable. However, the pace and scale of the international response would need to be stepped up in order to succeed in achieving that outcome.

55. **Ms. Fatima** (Bangladesh) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had exposed weaknesses in the global economic architecture, with the least developed countries and the poorest and most marginalized segments of society bearing the brunt. In her country, the decline in manufacturing exports and remittances had been devastating. The Government had been forced to roll out the biggest stimulus package in the history of the country, worth some \$13.25 billion. The entire world was on the verge of recession and millions of people were expected to lose their jobs.

56. Defeating the virus would require, first and foremost, universal and affordable access to vaccines; her country stood ready to contribute to mass production of the vaccine if technical know-how and patents were shared. Bangladesh had co-led a discussion group at the High-level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond. Fiscal stimulus, concessional finance and debt relief all needed to be scaled up for the least developed countries, and special stimulus packages should be designed to help prevent graduating countries from sliding back. Her country had adopted a national multidimensional poverty index to identify those who were at the highest risk from the pandemic's impact.

57. Bangladesh had been instrumental in the adoption of the Joint Statement on the Impact of Covid-19 on Migrants issued on 20 June 2020 on behalf of 103 countries, which had highlighted the drastic impacts of the crisis on migrant workers and global remittances. The loss of global markets and the disruption of global supply chains had reduced liquidity and foreign currency reserves, making it all the more important for advanced economies to fulfil their unmet promises on duty-free and quota-free market access, technology support and more accessible financing for micro-, small and medium-sized businesses. While the pandemic had demonstrated the indispensability of digital services, it had also exposed the digital divide.

58. Lastly, the pandemic had brought to the fore the inadequacy of the global response to climate change and biodiversity loss and the need for the advanced

economies to come up with bolder commitments on climate change in the run-up to the two upcoming climate-change conferences in Glasgow, United Kingdom and Kunming, China.

59. **Ms. Luo** (Singapore) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had plunged the global economy into its worst recession since the Great Depression. Not only was it jeopardizing development gains, but it was exacerbating nationalism and geopolitical tensions that threatened to further fragment the global community. The threefold challenge before the international community was to ensure health and safety, deliver a coordinated response to the impacts of the pandemic and lay the groundwork for an inclusive and sustainable recovery. International cooperation led by the United Nations would be crucial for safeguarding gains and advancing development objectives.

60. In building back better, it would be essential to strengthen the open, rules-based multilateral system and the global financial safety net. Singapore was committed to keeping the World Trade Organization (WTO) relevant and had worked with 22 other countries to establish the WTO multiparty interim appeal arbitration arrangement. The resources of IMF and the World Bank should be replenished to help developing countries tackle rising debt and slowing economic growth. The unimpeded flow of essential goods and services across borders was critical for recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. Singapore had partnered with other countries to increase the resilience, diversity and integration of supply chains, and had been a signatory to the joint ministerial statement on supply chain connectivity issued in May 2020.

61. As a maritime nation, Singapore called on all stakeholders to support the facilitation of crew changes and the well-being of seafarers. Her Government, which had undertaken a number of national initiatives to help industry adapt to new realities and seize new opportunities, would be sharing its experiences through the Singapore Cooperation Programme. In preparing for the discussions on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the United Nations development system must have clear mandates in place to ensure the effective delivery of services to developing countries.

62. **Ms. Hettiwelige** (Sri Lanka) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had laid bare existing global inequalities and threatened to reverse gains in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. All possible partnerships and all potential synergies should be employed during the decade of action.

63. Her country's national policy framework, entitled "Vistas of Splendour", focused on people-centred technology-based approaches. Her Government had reorganized ministry portfolios and established a Sustainable Development Council tasked with monitoring and evaluating governmental efforts to achieve the Goals. The Council had recently launched a portal to monitor and disseminate the status of Goal indicators. Sri Lanka had also recently established a Presidential Task Force in charge of Economic Revival and Poverty Eradication. Her Government had shifted to cash transfers from other forms of income support to promote social distancing among high-risk populations. Digital technology was being used to connect farmers with suppliers and consumers and to ensure uninterrupted education for students. WHO had commended Sri Lanka for the effectiveness with which its free universal health care had contained COVID-19 and minimized fatalities. Her country had been among the first in Asia to reopen schools and had even held an election during the outbreak. It had been designated a safe travel destination by the World Travel and Tourism Council.

64. Nevertheless, the debt burdens, capital outflow, devaluation of currencies, reduced remittances and lowered export earnings brought about by the pandemic were too devastating for any developing country to handle on its own. Her delegation appreciated the Initiative on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond launched by the Secretary-General and urged member States to abide by their ODA commitments. Some four decades after the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, South-South cooperation continued to offer viable solutions to development challenges, provided that it was treated as a complement to and not a substitute for ODA.

65. Building back better from the pandemic would also require continued attention to climate change. Her delegation looked forward to successful outcomes to the two upcoming climate-change conferences in Glasgow, United Kingdom and Kunming, China, and was pleased to have taken part in the first-ever summit on biodiversity convened by the President of the General Assembly during the general debate in September 2020. Sri Lanka was active in several conservation initiatives and called for joint efforts to protect marine resources and habitats in the Indian Ocean. Her Government wished to express its gratitude to UNDP for its support for national initiatives on climate-smart agriculture,

rehabilitation of irrigation systems, rainwater harvesting and safe drinking water.

66. **Mr. Paolino Laborde** (Uruguay) said that on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, the world was facing a crisis that demanded multilateral solutions. His delegation called on the international community to steer clear of nationalism and protectionism that might disrupt supply chains for medicine and equipment needed to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Particular attention should be paid to the most vulnerable groups that were the worst affected.

67. As the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals got under way, efforts should be redoubled to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. His country would be presenting its third voluntary national review of the Goals in 2021.

68. The institutional capacities of the United Nations should be strengthened to address all the various challenges. Domestically, his country's approach to sustainable development was holistic and involved tackling a range of issues that included the rule of law, democracy, human rights, anti-corruption and good governance. International efforts should focus on poverty eradication, the fulfilment of ODA commitments, alternative forms of financing, the elimination of the digital divide and good stewardship of the environment.

69. The continued commitment of his Government to the Paris Agreement was reflected in its recent creation of a Ministry of the Environment. That new body would consolidate a national agenda designed to promote more productive sustainable development while incorporating effective measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

70. His delegation welcomed the summit on biodiversity recently convened by the President of the General Assembly during which Uruguay had highlighted its commitments to promote the sustainable use of biodiversity and the conservation of natural resources.

71. It was unfortunate that countries such as his that were classified as high-income were deprived of access to concessional financing. He urged the international community to review the use of classifications based solely on per capita income and move towards more nuanced indicators that took into account the multidimensional nature of development. Lastly, he expressed his delegation's support for the Road Map for

Digital Cooperation, which could help countries to overcome the digital divide.

72. **Ms. Barros** (Timor-Leste) said that despite the progress made in a range of areas, her country's ambition of graduating to upper middle-income status by 2030 remained in jeopardy. As a small island State vulnerable to climate-related disasters, her country's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals were being further strained by the COVID-19 pandemic, as the outbreak had reversed the gains made by marginalized groups and had exposed inequalities. Her Government's two-stage national recovery plan aimed first to mitigate the immediate effects of the crisis and then to institute measures for sustainable change with a focus on the health-care system and a resilient and diversified economy.

73. Timor-Leste attached great importance to the discussions on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, given the vital support provided by the United Nations country team to its development efforts. Recognizing that addressing climate change was just as crucial as investment to its economic future, Timor-Leste had set a goal of producing 50 per cent of its energy from environmentally sustainable resources by 2030 and was implementing a number of conservation and habitat rehabilitation measures. To ensure social cohesion in its society, Timor-Leste delivered services to all communities without discrimination. The international community needed to show the same kind of solidarity by supporting small island developing States, the least developed countries and conflict and post-conflict countries. That should include access to COVID-19 vaccines, adequate financing, aid for trade and debt relief.

74. **Mr. Cuéllar Suárez** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that his delegation welcomed the relevance of building back better as the theme chosen for the general debate and the Initiative on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond. Developing countries were experiencing huge decreases in exports, remittances, foreign direct investment and ODA as a consequence of the pandemic. In that context, he called on the Bretton Woods institutions to review their country classifications based solely on per capita income. He also urged the developed countries to establish a new debt agreement that enabled developing countries to overcome their current difficulties and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

75. The increasing severity and unpredictability of climate events had served to highlight the relationship

between the health of the planet and the health of its human population. Population growth and unsustainable land use were causing a loss of forests and biodiversity that was approaching the point of no return. As a country known for its diverse flora and fauna, the Plurinational State of Bolivia had endorsed the Leaders' Pledge for Nature that emerged from the summit on biodiversity held on the margins of the current session, and was taking measures to address environmental issues – such as changes in rainfall – that were of particular concern to its indigenous population.

76. Along with the other landlocked developing countries, the Plurinational State of Bolivia supported the road map for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. He urged the developed countries to abide by their commitments on market access for countries in special situations. In the light of the attention drawn to the digital divide during the global lockdown, he also urged Member States to create partnerships to bring the benefits of information technology to all.

77. **Mr. Alsharrah** (Kuwait) said that the high hopes that had accompanied the start of the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals had been dashed by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. International institutions, countries and businesses needed to work cooperatively rather than competitively to develop vaccines and therapies that should be made available to all as soon as they were approved. Kuwait, itself classified as a high-income developing country, was providing assistance to WHO to enhance capacities, both to respond to the current crisis and to prepare for future outbreaks. Kuwait had thus far contributed some \$290 million to combating the virus and mitigating its effects at the regional and international levels.

78. The crisis had made it all the more important for the developed countries to meet their commitment to contribute 0.7 per cent of their gross national incomes as ODA. New tools and priorities were needed to meet the challenges of a new world. He commended the recent initiatives launched by the Secretary-General and urged an approach to the draft resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review that took into account the new normal.

79. **Mr. Iteboje** (Nigeria), speaking via video link, said that the Committee needed to work collaboratively to meet the new socioeconomic challenges posed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by the COVID-19 pandemic. In that context, his delegation welcomed the policy brief entitled “Debt and COVID-19:

A Global Response in Solidarity”, and supported the call for a suspension of all debt service while ensuring continued access to credit to help developing countries finance their pandemic responses. He also called for a reallocation of unused special drawing rights and a reduction in the cost of remittances. Those objectives were in line with the global commitment to have a fairer, more orderly and efficient international financial system that supported countries in achieving their development priorities.

80. His country was building back better by diversifying its economy away from oil and gas. His Government had launched a number of initiatives to redistribute resources for the benefit of the poorest and most vulnerable, including a conditional grant scheme, a national social investment programme, an enterprise and empowerment programme and a national social safety net programme. It was also providing targeted support to help businesses overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic.

81. Illicit financial flows diverted resources from both immediate and long-term needs. In that regard, he welcomed the interim report of the High-level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda and urged the Panel to ensure that its final report included recommendations that enabled countries to address the scourge of illicit financial flows holistically.

82. **Mr. Annakou** (Libya) said that even amid the difficult conditions that Libya was experiencing, his Government's Ministry of Planning had established a National Commission for Sustainable Development. In July 2020, his country had presented its first voluntary national review to the high-level political forum, during which it had highlighted its progress towards achieving a number of the Sustainable Development Goals while also noting the problems that it continued to face as a conflict-affected country. The Government of National Accord was doing its best to incorporate the Goals into its national plans and strategies. However, political instability and a lack of security were major obstacles, as was the dependence of the economy on oil and gas markets. The COVID-19 crisis had added yet another challenge to an infrastructure already weakened by conflict. He called on the international community to provide his country with assistance to address the pandemic.

83. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda depended on resource mobilization. Unfortunately, vast amounts of Libyan

resources had found their way to countries that provided safe havens for illicit financial flows. He called on the international community to take action to bring about the return of those resources. Furthermore, additional funds that might be enlisted in the service of development had been frozen since 2011 under United Nations sanctions resolutions. He called for those asset freezes to be lifted so that those funds might be invested on behalf of the Libyan people.

84. Libya was also a transit country for illegal migration and organized crime. Instead of focusing only on the symptoms, the international community needed to treat the root causes of illegal migration in the countries of origin and destination. He called on the countries neighbouring Libya to tighten their border controls and on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to step up monitoring of the sources of financing that fed illegal migration.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.