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Chair: Mr. Rai (Nepal)
later: Ms. Danielčáková (Vice-Chair). (Slovakia)

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

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. De La Mora Salcedo** (Mexico), in a pre-recorded video statement,* said that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had exacerbated inequalities, slowed economies and revealed the need for stronger international cooperation. Mexico had drawn up a draft resolution on ensuring access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment, which the General Assembly had adopted in April 2020, and whose content remained highly relevant. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should guide recovery: building back better in the aftermath of the pandemic required progress in the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development.

2. Mexico welcomed the decision to revitalize the Committee's work and advocated direct dialogue that transcended rhetoric and yielded tangible results. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system should be a priority not only for Governments, but also for all those who benefited from the work of the Organization in the field. In that connection, his delegation intended to propose measures for strengthening the resident coordinator system. The Committee must ensure that the resolutions it adopted were aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, and that they reflected the specific needs of vulnerable groups.

3. One critical inequality thrown into relief by the pandemic was the lack of Internet access of half the world's population. In that regard, Mexico continued to support the Secretary-General's Road Map for Digital Cooperation, and would continue to advance discussions in the Group of Friends on Digital Technologies, of which it was a Co-Chair.

4. In September 2020, Mexico had become the first country to issue a sustainable sovereign bond linked to

the Goals, a cutting-edge step in concessional financing and an example to follow.

5. **Mr. Popolizio** (Peru) said that the health and economic crisis caused by COVID-19 should be viewed as an opportunity to find global solutions to structural problems within countries and build back better, leaving no one behind. The United Nations was the ideal platform to coordinate a coherent international response, as part of which it should seek to eliminate protectionism and mistrust, with a view to mitigating the pandemic's economic effects. The international community must redouble its efforts to eradicate poverty and ensure that treatments, and an eventual vaccine against COVID-19, were treated as international public property.

6. The economic recovery packages that countries were implementing would allow them to begin to get back on track to implement the 2030 Agenda as the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals began. In that context, Peru welcomed the financial initiatives led by Jamaica, Canada and Costa Rica, which were designed to promote a more sustainable and inclusive recovery. Special attention must be given to middle-income countries under such initiatives to ensure that their recent hard-won political, economic and social gains were not lost. Peru had been prioritizing inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic growth, and had showcased its progress at the presentation of its second voluntary national review at the high-level political forum on sustainable development, held in July 2020. It was regrettable that, owing to the current circumstances, no ministerial declaration had been adopted by the forum.

7. The pandemic had exacerbated the environmental crisis, making urgent action all the more necessary. The widely accepted emphasis on economic growth above all else was increasingly putting societies and economies at risk. Climate financing remained critical; mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund should have the resources and capacity to take effective decisions, with the interests of developing countries fully reflected in decision-making processes. As one of

* The statement made by the representative of Mexico 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.

the world's 10 most megadiverse countries and a producer of crops that were essential for international food security, Peru knew that protecting biodiversity was vital. In 2019, it had hosted a presidential summit jointly with Colombia, which had given rise to the Leticia Pact for sustainable development and protection of the Amazon.

8. Disaster risk reduction must remain high on the international agenda. Disaster risk management should therefore be incorporated into all plans for the post-COVID-19 recovery, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

9. As the revitalization of the Committee's working methods was paramount, he urged delegations to present concise, specific and action-oriented resolutions.

10. **Mr. Kabba** (Sierra Leone) said that countries in special situations were the hardest hit by COVID-19, with challenges including a decrease in investment, trade and remittances; growing debt; and limited fiscal space further restricting their already limited response capacity. The pandemic's devastating economic impact had adversely affected the implementation of his country's medium-term development plan for the period from 2019 to 2023, as well as its 2020 budget. The Government had developed a short-term economic response programme and a health and social response plan, together with other measures aimed at mitigating the impact of the virus and preserving macroeconomic and financial stability.

11. Multilateralism and global solidarity were now more important than ever, and the establishment of the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund was encouraging in that regard. The United Nations system and the international community as a whole must urgently respond to the socioeconomic and humanitarian crisis, including by providing significant financial and technical support, in particular to the least developed countries. Sustainable recovery plans should be aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and public-private partnerships should be enhanced in order to build a more equitable global economy.

12. Despite the challenges faced by Sierra Leone, the Government was persevering with its medium-term development plan. One year in, it had prioritized Sustainable Development Goal 4, on quality education, and 16, on justice and strong institutions, while also ensuring a degree of investment in the remaining Goals. It had dedicated 21 per cent of the national budget to the provision of free primary and secondary education for all, with a special focus on the education of girls.

Women's empowerment, another key driver of national development, was also being prioritized.

13. **Ms. Ortez** (Honduras) said that social distancing measures and the need to quarantine were harming countries both economically and socially. With borders shut and global value chains interrupted, the economy of Latin America and the Caribbean was expected to shrink by some 4 per cent in 2020. The crisis was exacerbating pre-existing inequalities, making certain individuals and households, especially in developing countries, particularly vulnerable.

14. The Government of Honduras had implemented an impact-mitigation plan, the first measures of which were aimed at containing the virus and strengthening the health-care system. It had also taken steps to curb the macroeconomic impact of the pandemic and to guarantee that the most vulnerable families had basic necessities. However, a recession remained likely. In view of the scale of the informal economy in Honduras, it was possible that many businesses and workers would face a partial or complete loss of income, which would significantly affect their well-being in a context where 64.7 per cent of the population already lived below the poverty threshold. Those losses would in turn affect internal demand, which would further harm businesses, as well as overall economic progress.

15. In spite of the current crisis, Honduras remained committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, especially as the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals began. Developing countries faced a swathe of problems aside from the pandemic: the impacts of climate change, growing inequalities, persistent pockets of poverty and hunger, rapid urbanization and environmental degradation were all increasing the number of people facing hunger and poverty. It was necessary to transition to sustainable and resilient societies, where finite natural resources were managed sustainably and everyone had access to basic services.

16. The reduced access of middle-income countries to concessional financing was of concern in the light of the increasing demands and new development challenges they faced as their income levels grew. In that regard, multidimensional indicators were needed to accurately assess the complex and diverse realities of development and facilitate the appropriate distribution of resources. The COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity to build back better and achieve fair globalization, with respect for the rights and dignity of all. The 2030 Agenda made it imperative to move beyond traditional methods for measuring development, classifying

countries and allocating resources. It offered an opportunity to transform the world.

17. **Mr. Woodroffe** (United Kingdom), speaking via video link, said that it was important to continue with the reforms of the United Nations development system and the revitalization of the Committee's work, in view of the important role of the Organization. The United Kingdom had staunchly supported multilateralism throughout the pandemic and had contributed more than \$1 billion to the international response. The previous week, the Prime Minister had announced a further \$600 million for the COVAX Advance Market Commitment, and \$400 million for the World Health Organization over the next four years. The United Kingdom had also doubled its loan to the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and had provided up to \$190 million in debt-relief grants. It remained the third largest donor to the United Nations development system and continued to meet its commitment to provide 0.7 per cent of gross national income as official development assistance (ODA).

18. Once the emergency phase of COVID-19 was over, the international community should focus on a sustainable, inclusive, resilient and green recovery to create a better world for future generations. In that regard, the United Kingdom would continue to champion the gender-responsive approach articulated in the 2030 Agenda. Progress must be made towards gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including through access to 12 years of quality education for all girls, and support for sexual and reproductive health and rights. It was also vital to make progress on the implementation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

19. The year leading up to the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must be a year of commitment and action to prevent degradation, reduce emissions, increase resilience and accelerate green, inclusive and climate-resilient growth. The United Kingdom would host an ambition summit in December 2020 in partnership with the United Nations, and in 2021 would use its presidencies of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties and the Group of Seven to continue driving action on climate change.

20. The needs of the most vulnerable countries, whose inherent vulnerabilities had been exacerbated by the crisis, must be taken into account in all recovery efforts. As a co-lead of the discussion group on recovering better for sustainability under the Initiative on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond,

the United Kingdom would continue to prioritize the needs of those countries. Earlier in 2020 the United Kingdom had launched a call to action on remittances along with Switzerland, receiving cross-regional support. Later in October 2020, it would convene a conference on access to concessional finance in partnership with the small island developing States. Within the Group of 20 (G20), the United Kingdom championed broad eligibility for the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, and it fully supported the Initiative's extension. All G20 countries must implement the Initiative in full and subscribe to the highest standards on debt transparency in order to make it a success.

21. The principles of development effectiveness remained as relevant as ever. Increasing transparency and fighting corruption provided the best basis for sustainable economic growth. However, aid alone would not deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. As Member States had agreed at the third International Conference on Financing for Development, it was necessary to strengthen domestic resource mobilization, harness private sector investment and develop better, disaggregated data to guide decision-making.

22. **Mr. Grigoryan** (Armenia) said that the Committee had a major role to play in shaping the process of recovery after the pandemic and building back better, with the 2030 Agenda as a guide. The progress made on the reform of the United Nations development system was heartening, as it would enable the Organization to better assist Governments in accelerating their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

23. Unfortunately, some States had decided to take advantage of the vulnerabilities caused by the pandemic to carry out their long-standing threats of using force, in clear violation of the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire. On 27 September 2020, the armed forces of Azerbaijan, with support from external actors and foreign terrorist fighters, had launched a large-scale attack along the entire line of contact with Nagorno-Karabakh. Dozens of civilians had been killed and hundreds wounded in the course of ongoing Azerbaijani aggression. Civilian settlements and critical infrastructure had been destroyed, creating serious environmental risks. Azerbaijan had openly rejected the international community's calls to cease hostilities and commit to peace: instead it continued to endanger human lives and the right to development of peoples in the region.

24. Armenia attached great importance to the full implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for

Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, especially because landlocked developing countries would be among the worst affected by the pandemic. The adoption of the road map for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, on 25 September 2020, was an essential step in that regard.

25. Armenia had presented its second voluntary national review to the high-level political forum on 10 July 2020. The Government's ambitious reform agenda incorporated the Goals and covered nearly all areas of public life, but it was particularly focused on protecting human rights, ensuring the rule of law, combating corruption, improving public administration and promoting economic and social development. The country's long-term socioeconomic, educational and human development objectives were set out in the Armenia Transformation Strategy 2050. The Government was prioritizing investment in people and harnessing talent as a driver of development, with an emphasis on innovation and the development of the information and communications technology sector.

26. **Mr. Srivihok** (Thailand) said that the 2030 Agenda should guide the building back better process, and called for collective action to accelerate its implementation as the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals began. Recovery strategies must be people-centred, with efforts focusing on the most vulnerable to prevent persisting inequalities from becoming further entrenched. It was essential to ensure social protection and access to basic services for all, while continuing to invest in preparedness for potential future crises. COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines must be made global public goods, with equitable access to them for all.

27. The Goals should be localized, and local communities empowered to use their wisdom and expertise to address the specific challenges they faced. His country's home-grown approach to achieving the Goals, known as the sufficiency economy philosophy, was predicated on human development and building resilience. Thailand looked forward to continuing to share its approach, including through South-South and triangular cooperation.

28. As a zoonotic disease, COVID-19 served as a stark reminder of the need to redefine the relationship of humankind with nature. It might be necessary to adjust existing economic and financial models in order to address environmental challenges while also promoting growth. Thailand was working to achieve a bio-circular-green economy, which would support the achievement of the Goals through the use of science, technology and innovation.

29. Thailand had consistently supported reforms designed to make the United Nations development system more effective, accountable and responsive, and it welcomed the system's swift response to the pandemic. Thailand was contributing \$100,000 to the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund to support a rapid socioeconomic response in middle- and low-income countries and encouraged others to contribute. Looking ahead, the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review must push the United Nations development system to deliver more tangible results. Countries relied on the system to help safeguard development gains, address persistent and emerging challenges and advance actions to achieve the Goals.

30. **Mr. Fernandez De Soto Valderrama** (Colombia) said that firmer commitment and faster action to implement the 2030 Agenda had become even more critical, owing to the negative impacts of COVID-19. Moreover, the climate crisis had clearly exposed the links between human health, nature and ecosystems, making it imperative that developing countries, which were disproportionately affected, revive their economies in a manner that was sustainable, climate-resilient and low in carbon emissions. Limiting global warming to 1.5°C by 2030 meant reconstructing more sustainable and inclusive economies, reducing disaster risk and curbing biodiversity loss. As a megadiverse country, Colombia remained staunchly committed to the Paris Agreement and to the adoption of an effective, ambitious and achievable post-2020 biodiversity framework. It had recently signed the Leaders' Pledge for Nature, through which over 70 Heads of State and Government had committed to urgent action for environmental protection and restoration in the period up to 2030.

31. Multisectoral action was needed to increase productivity and generate employment. In that regard, mechanisms should be established to respond to the liquidity requirements of the business sector, with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises. For Colombia, strengthening exports, particularly those based on knowledge services and the creative economy, was a priority. It was also essential to make progress on electronic trade, value chains, technology and foreign direct investment, in line with the recommendations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development which Colombia had joined in 2020. Colombia remained committed to sharing good practices via South-South and triangular cooperation, which held extraordinary potential for supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

32. Appropriate consideration should be given to the central themes of the Committee's work in the new draft resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which was to cover the period from 2021 to 2024. Colombia remained convinced of the value of multilateralism to achieve development, peace and global security.

33. **Mr. Malik** (India) said that, at its second voluntary national review during the high-level political forum in July 2020, India had presented its national development programmes, which mirrored the international vision set out in the 2030 Agenda. Through economic and social initiatives, India had lifted more than 271 million people out of poverty, and since 2015, more than 400 million new bank accounts had been established for the poor. Through an initiative of the Clean India campaign, more than 110 million toilets had been built in rural areas with a view to improving sanitation nationwide, and 5 million people had health-care coverage under Ayushman Bharat, the world's largest health-care scheme.

34. The country's leadership in environmental conservation was demonstrated by its hosting of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, in February 2020, as well as the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in September 2019. India aimed to be free of single-use plastic by 2022 and to achieve land-degradation neutrality by 2030. However, it was important to ensure that environmental initiatives conformed to and reinforced the carefully negotiated environmental conventions, which represented the collective will and the common but differentiated responsibilities of States. In that regard, India did not subscribe to the recent trend of obfuscating the commitments made by developed countries and blurring the differences and balance between those conventions. It was equally important to resist the attempts being made to link together environmental and non-environmental issues.

35. India had launched several clean energy initiatives, which included expanding access to clean cooking fuel to over 80 million households and a plan to have 450 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2030. However, greater sensitivity was needed with regard to the energy mixes of certain countries, which were often not of their choosing. Transitions from one form of energy to another required a huge commitment, and demonizing countries without allowing the time necessary for a gradual transition was counterproductive.

36. The Prime Minister's vision of a self-reliant India had shaped the national response to the pandemic, which

involved a stimulus package of more than \$300 billion, and measures to protect lives and livelihoods. India had provided medical assistance to more than 150 countries, had pledged \$15 million to the Gavi Alliance and had operationalized the COVID-19 Emergency Fund of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation with an initial contribution of \$10 million. As the largest vaccine-producing country, India intended use its production and delivery capacity for the benefit of all humankind.

37. Committed to South-South cooperation, India had actively promoted the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure; it was also supporting developing countries through the \$150 million India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund.

38. The pandemic offered an opportunity to make improvements. Similarly, the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals must inspire change and not become merely a decade for recovery.

39. **Mr. Sparber** (Liechtenstein) said that the far-reaching impacts of COVID-19, combined with the unabating climate crisis and biodiversity loss, made it clear that progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals had been insufficient thus far. Earlier and greater investment in effective, accountable and transparent institutions, health care and social systems and the environment would have stood the world in much better stead to handle the current pandemic, and to deal with future threats.

40. The principles of inclusion, equity, growth and sustainability that underpinned the Goals were key to building back better. In particular, Goal 16 on the rule of law and strong institutions was crucial for an effective and sustainable response, and for the prevention of future crises. Liechtenstein agreed with the Secretary-General on the need to rebuild trust in institutions, which must have responsible political leadership to support the achievement of the Goals. It was also convinced of the vital coordinating role of the United Nations in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

41. Human trafficking and modern slavery were on the rise as a consequence of the widespread social and economic effects of COVID-19. As more families fell into extreme poverty, children in disadvantaged communities were at much greater risk of child labour, child marriage and child trafficking. For the first time in 20 years, the global gains in reducing child labour looked likely to be reversed. The Government and the private sector of Liechtenstein were strongly committed to tackling financial flows stemming from modern

slavery and human trafficking, and to that end had established a public-private initiative called Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking.. They had also developed a blueprint to support financial actors to help eradicate slavery, including through the promotion of sustainable and innovative financing, responsible lending and investment, as well as compliance and regulation. The General Assembly, and in particular the Second Committee and the high-level political forum on sustainable development, as well as the Security Council, the G20 countries and other relevant actors could play an important role in securing political backing for and facilitating dissemination of the blueprint.

42. Financial flows stemming from criminal activity not only deprived Governments and citizens of financial resources for sustainable development, but they also undermined the rule of law and public institutions. The funds from trafficking in drugs, arms and human beings were often used subsequently in other illegal activities such as money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.. The different components of those illicit financial flows therefore needed to be analysed in a clear way that could then inform the design of effective policy responses. Amalgamating financial flows under the generic term “illicit financial flows” risked reducing clarity and understanding, which in turn undermined policy responses.

43. **Ms. Oh** Hyunjoo (Republic of Korea), speaking via video link, said that multilateral action and enhanced macroeconomic policy coordination were needed to prevent the COVID-19 crisis from leading to an enduring global recession. Coordination to safeguard global value chains and free trade, based on the multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization (WTO), was also critical. The Republic of Korea had been working to shield global supply chains against disruptions and facilitate the essential cross-border movement of people.

44. In July 2020, the Government had introduced a new strategy for sustainable growth in the post-COVID-19 era, the Korean New Deal, aimed at building a low-carbon, eco-friendly, digitized and more equal and inclusive economy. The Republic of Korea would submit an updated nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement by the end of 2020 and looked forward to presenting its long-term low greenhouse gas emission strategy shortly. It would also host the second summit of Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 in 2021. With the help of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the first International Day of Clean Air for blue skies had been celebrated in four cities in September 2020.

45. The pandemic served as a reminder of the value of multi-stakeholder partnerships. The robust testing, tracing and treating efforts of the Republic of Korea in response to COVID-19 would not have been effective without strong partnerships with the private sector. It was therefore important to continue to engage with a diverse range of actors, including civil society, youth, the private sector, philanthropists, the media and academia.

46. When negotiating the draft resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, Member States should ensure that the progress made since the adoption of the 2016 review was embedded and sustained. An enhanced system-wide approach centred on integrated policy advice and programme support would help to manage trade-offs and create synergies among different priorities. Empowered resident coordinators should facilitate the coherence of country teams and strengthen the linkages between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts.

47. **Mr. Valtýsson** (Iceland) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had hit the most vulnerable the hardest; people without social safety nets would take longer to recover from its socioeconomic effects. As the decade for action for the Sustainable Development Goals began, it was imperative to protect the gains already made, as uneven and insufficient as they were, and to step up efforts where they were most needed, such as addressing food insecurity, deterioration of the natural environment, and persistent and pervasive inequalities.

48. Sustainability had been key to his country’s prosperity: respecting its natural resources and promoting gender equality and human rights had enabled Iceland to enjoy rapid and relatively inclusive socioeconomic growth. In its foreign policy and international development cooperation, Iceland therefore focused on sustainable development, including by working to address climate change, reduce gender inequalities and secure human rights for all. As co-leader of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on gender-based violence, Iceland urged other countries to work to achieve gender equality, including by ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health care and rights and combating sexual and gender-based violence. All countries should devote greater attention to those whose fundamental rights were under threat, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and other vulnerable groups.

49. Since the early 1900s, Iceland had been focusing on improving land quality and limiting land degradation, which was the root cause of many pressing societal challenges. Iceland continued to support the

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, including through the Group of Friends on desertification, land degradation and drought. Some of the most effective solutions were low-cost, simple and nature-based, such as land restoration.

50. As the next cycle of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review began, the Committee must ensure that the new draft resolution provided meaningful and forward-looking guidance for the challenging times ahead. The Committee should also continue with the process of revitalizing its working methods in order to ensure that its work was fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda and that it did not continue to discuss outdated issues. Iceland remained fully committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda and building back better and greener, both at home and abroad.

51. **Ms. Moldoisieva** (Kyrgyzstan) said that her Government remained committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda through its national plans and strategies, as its resources allowed. International assistance, especially from the United Nations, other international organizations and the Bretton Woods institutions continued to play an important role in that regard. Kyrgyzstan had presented its first voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in July 2020.

52. The COVID-19 pandemic had necessitated additional measures to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; in particular, financing for development and debt relief measures were needed. External debt restructuring, with a focus on debt swaps for projects in the areas of health care, environmental protection and the transition towards a green economy, would free up additional resources to combat COVID-19, enabling Member States to recover better and more sustainably. Enhanced international cooperation to fight corruption, increase financial transparency and ensure the return of illegally transferred assets would also increase the access of developing countries to the financial resources they needed to combat the pandemic.

53. Equally important was the restoration of trade, which had been disrupted by the pandemic. As developing countries depended on imports of certain essential goods, including medicines, Member States should apply only necessary and proportionate limitations to the free movement of goods. Kyrgyzstan stood ready to participate in the informal consultations on the update of the annual resolution on international trade and development, which should contribute to addressing the trade crisis.

54. Her Government was consistently implementing key provisions of the Sendai Framework and would continue to support United Nations initiatives and resolutions designed to address the threat of natural disasters. In the light of the need for stronger international cooperation to produce effective, sustainable solutions to climate change and environmental degradation, Kyrgyzstan had signed and ratified the Paris Agreement. The Government welcomed the focus on mountainous countries in the 2030 Agenda as it attached special significance to the preservation of fragile mountain ecosystems.

55. Considering that most of the Earth's ecosystems were transboundary, her delegation had decided to propose a new draft resolution entitled "Nature knows no boundaries: transboundary cooperation is a key factor in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity", with a view to the preservation of biodiversity through the further development of cooperation.

56. Her delegation supported the efforts to rationalize the work of the Committee and hoped that the key agenda items would benefit from full consideration during the current session.

57. **Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) said that in the light of the devastating economic and social consequences of the pandemic, a true global partnership based on multilateralism and solidarity was more important than ever. However, cooperation to counteract the effects of COVID-19 must not replace the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, particularly those designed to eradicate poverty. The right to development was universal, and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities was critical to its enjoyment. The developed countries must fulfil their ODA commitments by providing additional, predictable and adequate financial resources, as well as technology transfer and capacity-building, to enable developing countries to pursue development.

58. Nicaragua had managed to reduced poverty significantly, from 48.3 per cent in 2007 to 24.9 per cent in 2017, through social and economic programmes and projects. Nicaragua was also one of the five top countries in the world for gender parity. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) had ranked Nicaragua third globally for women in public office, and gender equality was advanced through a top-priority State policy.

59. The efforts of developing countries to eradicate poverty were being hindered by the imposition of unilateral coercive measures, which, in the context of

the pandemic, constituted crimes against humanity, making their immediate suspension a matter of necessity. Urgent debt relief measures were also essential to avoid a prolonged public debt crisis.

60. There was an urgent need to move towards a fair and mutually supportive model of trade and social, economic and financial development. The developed countries must change their unsustainable production and consumption patterns and fulfil their commitments to developing countries. Ambitious action was needed to implement the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The developed countries must assume their historical responsibilities by proposing effective measures to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C. They should also provide the financial resources necessary to enable developing countries to take adaptation and mitigation action and help them to deal with the loss and damage caused by global warming.

61. Nicaragua was concentrating on strengthening the care, protection, conservation and responsible use of the natural wealth of ecosystems and wildlife through creative nature-based solutions that supported sustainable and local development.

62. **Mr. Niang** (Senegal) said that the theme of the current session could not be more appropriate in the light of the crisis caused by COVID-19, which was expected to result in a 4.9 per cent fall in global growth. The international community should use the 2030 Agenda as its guide to build back better in the wake of the pandemic. However, while there had been progress in areas including education, health care and sanitation, in other areas, such as food insecurity and the environment, the opposite was true.

63. Three priorities should underpin the work of the decade ahead to reduce inequalities, eliminate poverty and establish social peace and economic security. First, financing for development was an urgent requirement. The six discussion groups established as part of the Initiative on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond had proposed specific policy options relating to external finance, global liquidity and financial stability, debt vulnerability, engagement of private sector creditors and illicit financial flows. Other financing efforts were also under way, such as the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, which should be extended at least beyond 2021. Multilateral development banks should be urged to proactively support developing economies, and financing for development must integrate the digital challenge and innovative environmental solutions.

64. Second, protecting the climate and implementing nature-based solutions must be priorities within recovery plans. Climate financing enabled developing countries to focus on green policies. The developed countries must do their utmost in order to mobilize their pledged \$100 billion per year starting in 2020. As the President of the General Assembly had stated at the summit on biodiversity, the COVID-19 pandemic should be used as an opportunity for a “green recovery”, which could help to unlock an estimated \$10 trillion in business opportunities and create 395 million jobs by 2030.

65. Third, cooperation and multilateralism, which could shield the world against major crises, must be strengthened.

66. Lastly, in view of the fact that teleworking was not straightforward, and small delegations were consequently unable to cover all meetings, the Committee must strive to complete its work in the time agreed upon.

67. **Ms. Mwangi** (Kenya) said that, as the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals began, Kenya remained committed to scaling up global, local and individual action to accelerate sustainable solutions to the world's toughest challenges. Science, technology and innovation were critical in that regard; indeed, the pandemic had highlighted the urgent need to eliminate the digital divide, making increased international cooperation in the form of technology transfer and capacity-building a necessity.

68. Under the national development programme, Kenya Vision 2030, her Government was currently focusing on affordable and decent housing, increased manufacturing, universal health coverage and food security and nutrition for all Kenyans. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Kenya had made remarkable progress in such areas as poverty reduction, health care, education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, clean energy, resilience to climate change and sustainable cities and human settlements. Kenya had shared those accomplishments in July 2020, when it had presented its second voluntary national review to the high-level political forum.

69. As financing the national development agenda remained a challenge, Kenya welcomed the ongoing discussions on financing for sustainable development, including the recent High-level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond. The pandemic had undermined the fiscal policies of countries and, as a result, domestic resource mobilization had been brought to a standstill in Kenya. Nevertheless, the crisis could be conducive to reforms

that would increase tax revenues. For instance, many businesses and workers had registered to access COVID-19 economic stimulus packages, creating an opportunity to formalize the informal sector and thereby broaden the tax base.

70. Days before the summit on biodiversity, Kenya had co-hosted the Leaders' Event for Nature and People, where it had joined over 70 world leaders in endorsing the Leaders' Pledge for Nature. As a megadiverse country, Kenya was particularly conscious of the urgent need to reduce the global environmental footprint. Climate change cost Kenya approximately 3 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) annually, had impoverished millions and was reversing the gains made towards the Goals. Kenya would be co-hosting the United Nations Ocean Conference in 2021. All delegations were urged to participate in the Conference, with a view to harnessing science and innovation for conservation, sustainable use of the oceans and the blue economy. The high-level dialogue on energy to be held in 2021 would provide an opportunity to accelerate action towards the achievement of Goal 7, on access to energy.

71. **Mr. Abdelaal** (Egypt) said that his country's Egypt Vision 2030 plan, launched in 2016, had set forth ambitious economic, legal, institutional and structural reforms that had already been reflected in development indicators and were creating decent work opportunities, raising living standards and empowering women and youth. Egypt had presented voluntary national reviews to the high-level political forum in 2016 and 2018. As Chair of the Group of 77 and China during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, Egypt had played a major role in efforts to reform the United Nations development system. In keeping with his country's strong support for South-South cooperation, the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development had launched a number of capacity-building programmes in Africa.

72. The Committee's deliberations on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review provided an opportunity to improve the United Nations development system through a reinvigorated resident coordinator system, greater responsiveness to country needs and innovative financing mechanisms. He urged States and international financial institutions to meet – and preferably exceed – their ODA commitments. In March 2020, Egypt had put forward an initiative asking the G20 countries to take action to lighten the debt burden of African countries during the COVID-19 crisis. Multilateral action was also needed to combat illicit financial flows. As the COVID-19 pandemic threatened to reverse development gains around the world, the

international community needed to redouble efforts to bridge the digital divide and also to diversify financing mechanisms.

73. Climate change had particularly dire implications for developing States. In the Sahel, of which Egypt was a part, sustainable agriculture and food security were being threatened by desertification and drought. Good-faith efforts and a long-term vision were needed for the governance of transboundary watercourses to ensure that estuary States did not suffer because of a lack of coordination among basin States. Climate change should be addressed by a balance of mitigation and adaptation. Egypt had served as host of the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in 2018, and looked forward to further progress on strengthening the biodiversity framework in 2021 and beyond.

74. **Mr. Teklu** (Ethiopia) said that a revitalized global partnership was imperative to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals: developed countries must redouble their efforts to fulfil their commitments to provide financial and technical capacity-building support to developing countries, especially those in special situations. Ethiopia therefore appreciated the recently convened High-level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond.

75. Over the last decade, Ethiopia had implemented integrated pro-poor policies and had recently begun to register encouraging results: people's quality of life was improving and the country had been sustaining rapid economic growth. However, the pandemic was reversing those gains, as it was for many developing countries. The ability of developing countries to sustainably manage and service debt, in particular, had been affected. It was necessary to raise ambition regarding the reduction of unsustainable debt burdens, as developing countries did not have a cushion to alleviate the financial shocks caused by the crisis.

76. Ethiopia took climate change extremely seriously, as a country badly affected by that phenomenon and on the front lines of the fight against its devastating consequences. Biodiversity loss had reached a critical level, with a potential impact on the Sustainable Development Goals. As a party to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ethiopia had made significant progress on setting up legal and institutional frameworks, raising awareness and facilitating access to genetic resources, as well as establishing benefit-sharing schemes. However, the emerging trend of some users moving away from

bilateral access benefit-sharing schemes in favour of multilateral ones was a matter of concern.

77. Collective efforts to build back better and greener necessitated an adequately resourced, relevant, coherent, efficient and effective United Nations development system. In that regard, country teams must continue to be properly resourced and staffed so that they could support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in line with national needs and priorities. The 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review was therefore an important opportunity to bring about that outcome. Countries in special situations required an enabling environment and sufficient international support to implement their national development policies. South-South cooperation would also be critical.

78. **Ms. Juul** (Norway) said that the response of the United Nations development system and the multilateral development banks to the current crisis was commendable. Increased cooperation at the country level under the leadership of resident coordinators and the development system's recourse to flexible sources of financing were indications that the system reforms were already bearing fruit. However, with the pandemic likely to have reversed years of progress, decisive action was needed to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. ODA alone was insufficient: the private sector must be mobilized. Corruption, tax evasion and other forms of illicit financial flows must be combated; financial accountability, transparency and integrity strengthened; and increasing debt problems addressed – the ongoing debt moratorium for the poorest countries should be only a first step.

79. Climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss were hindering progress on all the Goals, and their impacts were felt the most by vulnerable countries. The pandemic had exposed and compounded structural inequalities, including the digital divide. In the light of such inequalities, the international community must focus on leaving no one behind. It must also address the nexus between the humanitarian response, long-term development and peacebuilding, while ensuring that human rights, democracy, good governance, the rule of law and gender equality were at the core of the response and recovery efforts.

80. In order to build a more collaborative, coherent, integrated, accountable and efficient United Nations development system, discussions on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should be shaped by eight priorities. First, the role of the United Nations system as custodian of the universal values of the Charter of the

United Nations, and international norms and standards, must be strengthened. Second, the implementation of the reforms already adopted must be ensured. Third, resident coordinators must be empowered to fulfil their role as strategic leaders of country teams. Fourth, United Nations cooperation at the country level, across the peacebuilding, development and humanitarian pillars, must be enhanced. Fifth, a coordinated COVID-19 response was needed by the United Nations system, based on the 2030 Agenda and involving the multilateral development banks. Sixth, action to prevent external shocks and build resilience in the face of climate change must be scaled up. Seventh, the United Nations must use its convening power to aid countries in building partnerships for the Goals. And, lastly, Member States must provide flexible and predictable funding.

81. **Mr. Akram** (Pakistan) said that access to a COVID-19 vaccine, when it became available, must be affordable and equitable. Despite the financial constraints that Pakistan faced, its Prime Minister had provided a stimulus of more than \$8 billion – 3 per cent of GDP – to support the poor and keep the economy afloat. A “smart lockdowns” strategy had enabled Pakistan to control the spread of the virus. However, domestic measures were insufficient. While the developed countries had generated a stimulus of \$13 trillion to revive their economies, the developing countries were struggling to scrape together even a fraction of the \$2.5 trillion that they were estimated to need to recover.

82. In April 2020, the Prime Minister of Pakistan had proposed a global debt-relief initiative as one of the quickest ways to create fiscal space for developing countries. Pakistan had later co-chaired the discussion group on debt and COVID-19 under the Initiative on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond. For Pakistan, it was critical that agreement be reached on the following options for urgent action: extension of the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative for at least another year; net inflows from the multilateral development banks equal to or more than the debt suspension; cancellation or major restructuring of the debt of the least developed countries; vastly expanded concessional financing through the International Development Association and other concessional sources; debt buybacks and debt swaps in the areas of climate, the Sustainable Development Goals and health; private sector participation through the liquidity and sustainability facility proposed by the Economic Commission for Africa; and, most importantly, the creation of at least \$500 billion in new special drawing rights and the reallocation of unused quotas to the developing countries.

83. It was also necessary to identify the policy actions that would be vital to building the economy of the future. Critical needs included a restructured financial architecture to ensure greater equity and efficiency; a fair international tax regime and a halt in illicit financial flows; a development-oriented and fair trading system within the framework of WTO; growth led by investment, in particular investment in sustainable infrastructure; alignment of the intellectual property regime with the Sustainable Development Goals; and the digitalization of developing countries' economies.

84. Lastly, simultaneous action was needed to avoid the impending climate catastrophe. With adequate financial and technological support, and utilizing the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, developing countries could build sustainable economic models without sacrificing growth. They could also contribute to the achievement of the climate goals, for example through nature-based initiatives – such as the Prime Minister's plan to plant 10 billion trees – and by choosing renewable energy as the preferred option and ensuring energy efficiency.

85. **Mr. Vongnorkeo** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic, combined with increasingly frequent natural calamities and widening income inequality within and among countries, threatened to severely hinder long-term development at all levels. That was particularly true for developing countries, which relied heavily on international trade for inclusive economic growth, poverty eradication and other national development priorities, as well as implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

86. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was doing its utmost to mitigate the impacts of the crisis and maintain the progress it had made towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals thus far. However, the immediate and long-term consequences of the pandemic, which had affected livelihoods and efforts in the areas of poverty eradication, health, education, employment and social protection, had undoubtedly translated into a decline in economic growth and a slowdown in progress towards the Goals.

87. Against that backdrop, a united global response and a renewed commitment to multilateralism were essential. A socioeconomic impact assessment of COVID-19 was needed, along with technical and financial support from development partners, the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other stakeholders. The Lao People's Democratic Republic remained determined to eradicate poverty and

achieve sustainable development. It counted on the continued support of partners for its national development efforts and stood ready to work closely with the international community to win the battle against COVID-19, restore and accelerate progress towards the Goals and build back better.

88. *Ms. Danielčáková (Slovakia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

89. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Cuba) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had reversed much of the – albeit insufficient – progress made towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the international community's response to date had shown that multilateralism was weak and under threat. The current crisis had thrown into relief the need for stronger multilateralism, solidarity and cooperation as the foundations for international relations, compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and respect for international law. The full and timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework, among other important instruments, would be impossible while Governments continued to take unilateral, isolationist, coercive and protectionist actions to the detriment of humanity as a whole, and particularly of the developing world. Global problems required global solutions, by and for all States, without discrimination or political, economic or other exclusions. Solutions must also take into account the different national realities, capacities and levels of development, as well as the sovereign equality, of all Member States.

90. While the resources, technology and capacity for sustainable, long-term and inclusive solutions were now available, they were not being utilized. Developed countries must begin to systematically meet their ODA commitments; a new financial architecture was needed; and a long-term and sustainable solution to the problem of developing countries' debt, already paid multiple times over, must be found. Special and differentiated treatment for developing countries should be reinforced: the international community must not continue to hinder people's exercise of the right to development. The Paris Agreement and its work programme must be implemented to save the planet for the generations to come: no country was entitled to unilaterally deny its international or historical responsibility, or to ignore the ecological debt it owed to future generations.

91. On countless occasions the international community had rejected the imposition of unilateral coercive measures as incompatible with international

law and the Charter of the United Nations. Nevertheless, for 60 years the Cuban people had been subjected to such measures as a result of the illegal, immoral and unfair genocidal economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the Government of the United States of America. The impact of the embargo had intensified with the extraterritorial activation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act and new measures imposed in 2020, against the backdrop of the pandemic. In spite of such adverse circumstances Cuba continued to pursue its development plan, which covered the period up to 2030.

92. **Mr. Dai Bing** (China) said that the international community needed to redouble its efforts in various areas in order to build back better. First, it should pursue globalization and build an open world economy. In doing so, it must address issues such as the wealth gap and the development divide, and find the appropriate balance between government and the free market, fairness and efficiency, growth and income distribution, and technology and employment, so as to ensure full and balanced development that benefited all. It should uphold the multilateral trading regime under WTO, reject unilateralism and protectionism, and ensure the stable and smooth functioning of global industrial and supply chains.

93. Second, the international community must enhance cooperation to tackle the global economic downturn. Coordinated and effective monetary and fiscal policies should be implemented, and development should be a priority of global macroeconomic policy. The developed countries must honour their development assistance commitments. Development resources must be fully mobilized, including by maximizing the use of IMF special drawing rights.

94. Third, it was important to improve governance and enhance preparedness to meet global challenges, including by safeguarding the international system and by reforming the United Nations development system. Extensive consultation, cooperation and shared benefits should be prioritized to ensure that all countries enjoyed equal rights and opportunities and followed the same rules. More attention should be given to the concerns of developing countries, which must have a greater voice in global economic governance.

95. Fourth, the international community should pursue green development and a resilient recovery. It must accelerate action to combat climate change and preserve biodiversity, while promoting a global transition to a green, low-carbon economy.

96. With painstaking effort, China had managed to bring COVID-19 under control and to reopen its

economy, which was expected to grow in 2020. In a spirit of empathy, it would provide \$2 billion in international assistance over the next two years and would also fully implement the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative and support its extension. Furthermore, it had cancelled the debt owed on interest-free government loans to African countries that were due to mature before the end of 2020.

97. China vigorously promoted innovation and the development of the digital economy, 5G and artificial intelligence, and had proposed the Global Data Security Initiative. It intended to scale up its intended nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement, strive to ensure that its carbon dioxide emissions peaked before 2030 and aimed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. By the end of 2020 China would have lifted all rural residents currently living below the poverty threshold out of poverty, meeting the 2030 Agenda poverty eradication target 10 years ahead of schedule. China was ready to share its experience with other developing countries, deepen South-South cooperation and achieve common development through cooperation on the Belt and Road Initiative.

98. China fully supported the role of the United Nations in international affairs. Accordingly, it would provide \$50 million to the United Nations COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan and \$50 million to phase III of the South-South Cooperation Programme between China and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. It would also extend the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund for a further five years beyond 2025, set up a United Nations global geospatial knowledge and innovation centre and establish an international research centre for big data on the Sustainable Development Goals.

99. **Mr. Costa Filho** (Brazil) said that one of the harmful consequences of the pandemic was an increase in world hunger. In that connection, Brazil had been playing a major role in addressing global food security, through the use of ground-breaking and sustainable technology that had enabled it to produce more commodities using less land. Over the span of 40 years, crop production in Brazil had grown by 385 per cent, while its agricultural area had grown by only 32 per cent. Only 30 per cent of the country's territory was used for agriculture and livestock, which allowed it to protect important ecosystems such as the Amazon biome. Its environmental laws were among the strictest in the world, and its low-carbon agriculture plan provided for concessional credit to farmers who employed climate-friendly technologies. The total area it had set aside for the protection of native vegetation was larger than the entire land area of the European Union.

100. Unfortunately, there was much to be done to build back better in terms of agricultural trade and food security: high tariff and non-tariff barriers abounded, and massive agricultural subsidies in developed countries not only jeopardized the environment and caused land degradation, they also hindered the establishment of robust agricultural sectors in the developing world. The consequence was elevated food prices, which hampered progress on poverty eradication and food security. Building back better entailed eliminating systemic obstacles to achieving common objectives, such as food security and adequate nutrition, but the rhetoric was still not matched by action and a protectionist approach to the agrifood market persisted, even during the current pandemic.

101. The energy mix of Brazil was comprised of 45 per cent renewable sources, demonstrating the viability of renewable alternatives to fossil fuels. The world would perhaps be in a very different situation, had some not dismissed the evident benefits of renewable fuels in favour of short-sighted economic and protectionist policies over the past 40 years.

102. For the duration of the temporary “new normal” at the United Nations, including the increased difficulties of reaching consensus on divisive issues through virtual negotiations, it was important to guarantee that the documents that emanated from the Committee’s work adequately reflected countries’ positions. At the same time, building back better should not become a selective exercise in which countries cherry-picked those issues of interest to them but conveniently ignored others.

103. **Ms. Tesfamariam** (Eritrea) said that the unpredictable and rapid spread of COVID-19 had put the international community’s commitment to multilateralism to the test. The international response had revealed weaknesses, and, in the midst of the crisis, the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals was beginning, making increased commitment and solidarity all the more necessary if no one was to be left behind. The Committee must work harder than ever to ensure that its commitments made a difference on the ground and that its discussions, which should be based on based on concise and action-oriented draft resolutions, were constructive.

104. Eritrea was a young nation transitioning from post-independence reconstruction to long-term inclusive and sustainable development. Its development model, based on social justice, had helped to bridge the economic and social gaps inherited at independence, strengthen national unity and boost socioeconomic growth and development, but much remained to be done. The Government was focusing on supporting the

most vulnerable sectors of the population, including people in rural areas. While it had done much to lay the foundations for sustainable economic growth, it would need to redouble its efforts to mitigate the impacts of both the pandemic and the looming locust infestation in the region.

105. Eritrea was working hard to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions and was committed to building a harmonious nation that fulfilled the aspirations and expectations of all its people.

106. **Mr. Mimouni** (Algeria) said that the United Nations plan for the immediate response to COVID-19 must complement the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals: both should be aimed at putting the world back on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. Sustainable development was enshrined in the new Algerian Constitution, which was to be put to the vote on 1 November 2020. His Government was implementing a national framework for monitoring progress against the Sustainable Development Goals, would soon have incorporated the 2030 Agenda into the national annual finance laws, and was developing a legal framework to incentivize and facilitate its implementation.

107. The pandemic was a reminder of the importance of multilateralism in ensuring that no country or individual was left behind. South-South cooperation, which the Government had integrated into its national development strategy, must also be strengthened to support the economic independence of developing countries. However, South-South cooperation was not a substitute for North-South cooperation, and the development of the countries of the South required the prioritization of equity and social progress, and respect for their sovereignty and equality in economic and political relations with the countries of the North. Implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda should be at the heart of action to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

108. The High-level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond had been a welcome opportunity for the international community to stress the importance of predictability, transparency and inclusiveness in the multilateral trading system; joint efforts to combat illicit financial flows and facilitate the return of stolen assets to their countries of origin; collective action to address the rise of debt vulnerability in developing countries; and aid development assistance and other concessional financing to help developing countries.

109. Algeria attached great importance to the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system and the subsequent resolutions of the Economic and Social Council on the subject. His delegation was committed to engaging constructively in the negotiations on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to ensure that the appropriate policy was in place for the development system in advance of the resident coordinator system review later in the year.

110. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) said that Morocco had presented its second voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in 2020. The country had seen unprecedented development over the last two decades and it continued to implement the policies, strategies and mechanisms needed to ensure that no one was left behind. A special development committee was entrusted with establishing a new social compact and reinvigorating the national economy.

111. In response to the current crisis, Morocco had swiftly put in place multidimensional measures to address the health, human and socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic. The King had ensured that there was a high level of support for the Moroccan people, especially the worst affected groups. A COVID-19 fund had been created to sustain the health system and economy and to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on households, businesses and vulnerable groups, including the newly unemployed and those in the informal economy.

112. Firm in its belief in the key role of global partnerships for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, Morocco had made South-South cooperation a pillar of its foreign policy, with a particular focus on cooperation with other African countries. In the context of COVID-19, the King had launched an initiative at the level of the African Heads of State and Government to establish an operational framework for joint efforts to combat the pandemic. Morocco had also provided medical assistance to the African Union Commission and to more than 20 African countries. In that same spirit of solidarity, it would spare no effort to ensure that the Committee gave Africa all the support it needed to achieve sustainable development and effectively respond to the pandemic.

113. As a result of disruptions to supply chains, food products were in short supply in the most disadvantaged regions, and particularly in Africa. Morocco would represent Africa in the advisory committee established in preparation for the United Nations Food Systems Summit of 2021, and, in that capacity, would do its

utmost to promote the interests of countries whose agrifood sectors were in crisis.

114. Morocco would fully support the Committee's work on climate change and energy transition and was also committed to contributing meaningfully to international, regional and African initiatives for sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, access to energy, social development and sustainable agriculture. At the current session, Morocco would present the biennial draft resolution on ecotourism for poverty eradication and protection of the environment, and the five-yearly draft resolution on a global code of ethics for tourism.

115. **Mr. Thapa** (Nepal) said that the pandemic had further marginalized countries in special situations; the hiatus in tourism and remittances, combined with disruptions to supply chains and trade, had made graduation from the least developed country category significantly more difficult. In addition to building back better, it was necessary to move away from the current, unsustainable economic model. The concerns of the poorest and most vulnerable countries must be placed at the centre of the development discourse, and development partners, the United Nations system and other stakeholders must scale up their support to enable those countries to cope with the current crisis and accelerate their implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

116. Nepal had presented its second voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in 2020. A robust and revitalized United Nations development system was needed to support national efforts to achieve sustainable development and a resilient recovery, making the upcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review particularly important. The pandemic must not be used as a pretext to move goalposts or justify inaction on pressing issues such as climate change or social and economic inequalities. Despite his country's negligible emissions, the impacts of climate change were severely affecting the lives of Nepalis. Although addressing climate change was a collective responsibility, the large emitters had a duty to scale up their action to reflect their contribution to climate change, in line with the Paris Agreement.

117. The current crisis had drastically restricted people's movement, making digital technologies a lifeline for many. However, a huge swathe of the global population lacked access to such technologies, and if the glaring gap in access was not bridged, inequalities would only become further entrenched. In the face of the pandemic, it was essential to muster political will and redouble efforts to leave no one behind. In that regard,

the Committee's deliberations would be instrumental in providing political guidance and raising ambition.

118. **Mr. Al-Khaqani** (Iraq) said that Iraq had presented its first voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in 2019 and would be presenting its second in 2021. However, his country's development efforts faced multiple obstacles in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic, the burdens incurred in its fight against terrorism, and the 23 per cent decrease in oil production it had agreed to with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries in April 2020, which would result in major budget shortfalls over the next few years.

119. The Committee's deliberations on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should yield further improvements in the United Nations development system, including more balanced geographic representation among resident coordinators and more experts from host countries employed by United Nations agencies.

120. Iraq was looking forward to the high-level dialogue on energy scheduled for 2021 in accordance with General Assembly resolution [74/225](#), and appreciated the efforts being made by the Secretariat and UN-Energy in preparation for that event.

121. He wished to draw particular attention to the problem of sandstorms, a matter of special concern to his country, where they destroyed vegetation, disrupted air traffic and exacerbated breathing problems. The latter taken on added importance in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also stressed the need for a mechanism to manage transboundary watercourses.

122. **Mr. Kim Song** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that unfair international economic relations, resulting in heavy debts, as well as conflicts and unilateral coercive measures, were preventing the developing countries from achieving their goals. Their situation had been exacerbated by the global health crisis, coupled with increasingly frequent natural disasters.

123. The Committee had a mandate to try to remedy those problems, and the Governments of all States should fully discharge their responsibilities with regard to economic development. Each country must employ the development model and strategy best suited to its conditions and the demands and interests of its people. International economic relations should be based on impartiality and mutual benefit, in order to foster the economic development of developing countries, which were unable to make progress under the existing international economic order. Asserting that "human

rights", "democracy" and "good governance" were preconditions for economic development was merely a political pretence for the imposition of Western values and development models.

124. In reality, peace and security were the prerequisites for economic development: only in conditions of lasting peace and stability would it be possible to mobilize more labour, capital and technology for economic development. The United Nations should play a central role in dialogue and negotiations relating to international economic development, and it should ensure that agreements reached at major international conferences were comprehensively implemented, while also strengthening international cooperation to overcome COVID-19 as a matter of priority.

125. The people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, rallied around their leader, were dynamically advancing a powerful socialist State. The Government was making every effort to develop the economy and improve living standards. It was a source of pride for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that its people united firmly around their leader in difficult situations and helped and encouraged one another. The Government would continue to expand multifaceted economic cooperation with all countries that aspired to build a peaceful and just world on the basis of independence, equality and mutual benefit. His delegation looked forward to finding practical ways to improve the international economic situation through the exchange of views among Member States.

126. **The Chair** said that, if she heard no objections, she would take it that the Committee agreed to hear the last speaker in English only.

127. *It was so decided.*

128. **Ms. Badjie** (Gambia) said that COVID-19 was hurting the Gambian economy, as the country diverted critical resources to uphold its fragile health infrastructure. Her Government had conducted a rapid socioeconomic impact assessment of COVID-19 and had formulated a response plan that involved public and private sector actors, civil society, development partners and other stakeholders. At the same time, the Government was also making major efforts to revitalize the primary health-care system and achieve universal health coverage.

129. In June 2020, the Government had signed an agreement with the United Nations Development Programme to implement the Programme for Accelerated Community Development, aimed at reducing disparities in access to economic infrastructure between urban and rural areas. The Government had

also implemented a new social protection programme in the country's poorest 30 districts, and had initiated the midterm evaluation of its national development plan for the period from 2018 to 2021, with a view to crafting a robust national recovery plan.

130. The pandemic had exacerbated the challenge of debt sustainability. The Gambia therefore reiterated the call for debt relief and cancellation, in order to free fiscal resources for life-saving interventions and sustainable investment in the economies of developing countries. Enhanced access to global finance was also needed, as domestic liquidity had already become a challenge for most developing countries owing to the economic downturn. Development partners must meet their development assistance commitments, and more must be done to support private sector investment, which was critical to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

131. Dwindling biodiversity had a direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of communities in the Gambia. A new national policy on natural resources provided for local capacity-building in sustainable natural resource management, and the Government also sought to enhance the resilience of vulnerable communities through its climate change policy. The Gambia had submitted its voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in July 2020, following an inclusive consultation process.

132. Lastly, the Gambia called for a more coordinated approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and, in particular, for increased sharing of best practices in the light of the challenges posed by the current crisis.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.