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President: Mr. Chindawongse (Vice-President) (Thailand)

Contents

Agenda item 8: Coordination segment (continued)

Panel discussion: “Pathways for a resilient and inclusive economic recovery”

Panel discussion: “Harnessing science, technology and innovation, including digital technologies”

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In the absence of Mr. Kelapile (Botswana), Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 8: Coordination segment (continued)

Panel discussion: "Pathways for a resilient and inclusive economic recovery"

1. **Mr. Steiner** (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), panellist, said that at the start of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in 2019, no one had anticipated the stark divergence in access to COVID-19 vaccines. As a result of the vaccine divide, for the first time in the twenty-first century, gross domestic product (GDP) was growing faster in the industrialized world than in developing countries, where many Governments were finding it harder and harder to provide increased social support. If the developed countries allowed vaccine inequity and its economic impact to continue, they would find themselves in an increasingly stressed and divided world.

2. To achieve an inclusive, resilient and sustainable global recovery, the whole world must be vaccinated. In addition, the United Nations family, international financial institutions and bilateral financiers must take immediate action to provide adequate financial support to struggling States by expanding the fiscal space and realigning financial flows. That meant taking multilateral action on debt relief, concessional financing and special drawing rights (SDRs).

3. To come out of the crisis and move forward, it was extremely important to invest in youth and women's employment, health, safety and security for refugees and internally displaced persons, and just energy transitions. A short-term spike in energy prices was no reason to abandon the targets and agreements adopted at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In fact, one bold, cost-effective way to promote recovery would be to invest in green energy for the more than 900 million people still without electricity.

4. **Ms. Grynspar** (Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), panellist, speaking via video link, said that unequal systems were inherently brittle; thus the current unequal recovery was a pathway to fragility. While the economies of advanced countries had rebounded, most developing economies were recovering very slowly. Moreover, monetary tightening in the North threatened to produce capital flight and financial volatility in the

South, and unprecedented disruptions in the global supply chain would continue to fuel inflation, especially in small island developing States. The threat of another lost decade was therefore real for many developing countries, and it was the responsibility of developed countries to mitigate that risk by redirecting their massive national stimulus investments towards development finance, climate transition and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The recent, largest-ever emission of SDRs and the push to recycle existing SDRs were positive developments, but they would prove ineffective without increased financial support, real debt relief and a recapitalization of the multilateral development banks.

5. The outcome document of the fifteenth session of UNCTAD outlined the desire of States to see meaningful reinvigoration of the capacity of UNCTAD for research, technical cooperation and consensus-building capacities. Indeed, there were many trade- and development-related issues to be addressed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and she deeply appreciated the opportunity to seek greater synergies with the work of the Council. UNCTAD would build on the outcome of the coordination segment to strengthen its collaboration with the resident coordinator system.

6. **Mr. Li Bo** (Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the once-promising economic recovery was slowing as a result of the Omicron variant, supply chain disruptions, rising inflation and record debt, and the divergence in prospects across countries was deeply worrying. To foster recovery, it was essential to accelerate vaccination, to help low-income and vulnerable middle-income countries address structural challenges and to ensure a fair energy transition that promoted inclusive growth. To address those priorities, IMF had recently proposed a new resilience and sustainability trust, and it was engaging with partners such as the World Health Organization, the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, UNDP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to improve its advice and other services in relevant areas.

7. **Ms. Vukovich** (President of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office and Vice-Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission), panellist, speaking via video link, said that at its most recent session, the United Nations Statistical Commission had adopted the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) in order to be able to account for natural capital, which was a significant factor in human prosperity and well-being. In addition, SEEA allowed data to be organized around policy-relevant environmental themes such as climate

change, biodiversity and oceans. It provided an international statistical standard that underpinned several global environmental initiatives and a number of Sustainable Development Goal indicators. However, because SEEA addressed cross-cutting issues involving data from various sources, it required robust statistical and data systems.

8. The COVID-19 pandemic had placed an enormous strain on national statistical offices across all policy domains and had highlighted the need for greater resources and advocacy to implement SEEA. Moreover, extensive coordination and collaboration with line ministries and other data providers was required to collect data for cross-cutting frameworks such as SEEA, and that had been difficult during the pandemic. Partnerships and closer collaboration between institutions would be key to producing the statistics needed to create effective policies for a resilient and inclusive economic recovery.

9. **Mr. Nasir** (Indonesia) said that the decision to schedule the coordination segment would have a positive impact on the Council's work. To achieve a resilient and inclusive recovery, the global health architecture must be strengthened to respond promptly to inevitable future health crises and expedite the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 3, including by supporting robust health financing mechanisms and by harmonizing global health actions and protocols. It was also necessary to support micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises by providing easier access to financing and facilitating their integration into the digital economy, as well as to support a just energy transition by providing access to smart clean energy technologies and innovative financing.

10. **Ms. McGuire** (Observer for Grenada), speaking also on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Iceland, as co-facilitators for the preparation of the draft conclusions and recommendations of the seventh Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, said that, with the support of Member States, the forum could yield progress on some of the most critical issues for a balanced recovery, and they encouraged all States to participate actively in the financing for development process. All inputs would be duly and impartially considered.

11. **Mr. Anyaegbu** (Nigeria) said that, for a resilient global recovery, it would be necessary to relieve the debt burden of developing countries, establish a non-discriminatory and equitable international trading system, ensure equitable vaccine distribution, stop illicit financial flows, repatriate illicit assets and restructure

the global tax system to promote equity and economic development.

12. **Mr. Hill** (United States of America) said that broad-based, inclusive economic growth was critical for recovery and for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The United States remained committed to supporting low- and middle-income countries and continued to mobilize private-sector finance in developing economies by providing political risk insurance and loan portfolio guarantees. The United Nations system could support those efforts by helping developing countries understand how to build sustainable and responsible partnerships with the private sector.

13. To promote economic recovery, the Council must use the tools at its disposal to ensure the implementation of existing international anti-corruption obligations and commitments. States should advance best practices in business ethics, combat kleptocracy and foreign bribery, increase transparency in beneficial ownership information and provide a safe and open environment for non-governmental actors to promote transparency and uncover corruption. The United States welcomed further participation by non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector in the activities of the Council and its functional commissions and remained committed to partnership with all countries in special situations.

14. **Ms. Novelo** (Belize) said that, as a middle-income country struggling to access concessional financing while combating the effects of climate change, Belize fully supported the development and implementation of a multidimensional vulnerability index. With less than a decade remaining to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, strategic alignment of United Nations programmes and enhanced multi-stakeholder collaboration were urgent.

15. Belize had recently established a new ministry to ensure the sustainable use and management of its marine resources. It had also established a ministry responsible for sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk management, and, in that connection, it was grateful for the assistance received through the UNDP project for Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean.

16. **Mr. Rakhmetov** (Kazakhstan) said that he would appreciate the views of the Director General of UNCTAD on how implementation of the outcome document of the fifteenth session of UNCTAD would contribute to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and speed achievement of the Sustainable Development

Goals. He also wished to know how the Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development could help to promote the implementation of the outcome document.

17. **Mr. Beleván** (Peru) said that sustainable development was impossible without a new social contract, and the Council should explore the different components of such a contract. It should also reflect on the measures urgently needed to transform wasteful production and consumer patterns. In addition, the Council should consider methodologies and mechanisms for financing the development of sustainable and resilient infrastructure, and it should continue to take concrete measures to integrate issues relating to gender and vulnerable populations into its work.

18. To delink economic growth and social well-being from environmental degradation, GDP should be replaced by metrics that measured vulnerabilities and sustainability. He wondered how the United Nations Statistical Commission could promote the effort to replace GDP with such indicators.

19. **Mr. Dev Nath** (Bangladesh) said that the best way to promote a more equal recovery was to transfer the COVID-19 vaccine-related technologies to developing countries immediately so that they could scale up production and distribution. Development partners, multilateral donors and the private sector must support the efforts of developing countries to build back better. Action must also be taken to address global financial and economic volatility, tackle the multidimensional challenges of migrant workers, close the digital divide and promote growth in critical development sectors.

20. **Ms. Zamora Zumbado** (Observer for Costa Rica) said that the financial, trade and assistance systems did not consider income distribution, equity or many other aspects of sustainable development. As a result, countries such as hers were unable to access the official development assistance and concessional finance needed to build resilience and sustainability. The Council should lead efforts to encourage the international financial institutions to adjust their formulas to take risk and vulnerability into account. New financial mechanisms, such as debt-for-climate or debt-for-nature swaps, and initiatives such as the Fund to Alleviate COVID-19 Economics could also help to provide developing countries with the necessary funds.

21. **Mr. Steiner** (Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), noting that the Council appeared to have reached remarkable unanimity on the requirements for resilient recovery, said it would take many years to overcome the profound effects of the ongoing pandemic. As several delegations had

mentioned, building back better would require metrics that gave a clearer picture of each country's risks, strengths and vulnerabilities in order to fine-tune measures and assistance.

22. **Ms. Grynspan** (Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), speaking via video link, said that the outcome document of the fifteenth session of UNCTAD addressed a wide range of issues, including leveraging private-sector financing for development, support for small- and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries, debt management, climate finance, fiscal cooperation and illicit financial flows. The document also stressed the environment agenda and trade facilitation and recommended measures to close the digital gap. Another area of concern had been how to help the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States diversify their economic and productive structures.

23. **Mr. Li Bo** (Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)), speaking via video link, said that, in the context of ongoing cooperation between IMF and the United Nations, a group of ambassadors of the Council would meet with high-level IMF officials on 10 February 2022 to continue discussions on debt issues and how to ensure a just and sustainable recovery. Later, in April 2022, the IMF Executive Directors would attend the forum on financing for development follow-up. In addition, IMF and the Council were collaborating on the forthcoming *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2022*. Further to his earlier remarks, the proposed resilience and sustainability trust would support transformational projects in small States, low-income countries and vulnerable middle-income countries.

24. **Ms. Vukovich** (President of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office and Vice-Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission), speaking via video link, said that statistics brought all elements of development together. A key factor in resilience against the next crisis would be good and reliable data about the most vulnerable people and economic actors and how the crisis might affect them. Indeed, much of statistical development was aimed at identifying the most vulnerable and producing data to make the invisible visible and address their needs. It was important to invest in data and in the information infrastructure, because better data meant better lives.

Panel discussion: “Harnessing science, technology and innovation, including digital technologies”

25. **Mr. Zhao** Houlin (Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)), panellist, speaking via video link, said that despite strong global growth in Internet use during the COVID-19 pandemic, wide digital gaps remained between developed and developing countries, men and women, and urban and rural areas. For ITU, the promise to leave no one behind was a promise to leave no one offline and to make new and emerging technologies available to all. In pursuit of those goals, ITU had joined with other United Nations agencies in numerous initiatives, including projects to connect every school to the Internet, facilitate e-learning, provide digital skills training, develop fifth generation wireless networks and use artificial intelligence for health. ITU mobilized its members around global, regional and national projects in information and communications technology (ICT) involving administrations, regulatory agencies and the private sector, and in that connection, he wished to thank Saudi Arabia for stressing the importance of digitalization during its presidency of the Group of 20 in 2020.

26. The mandate of ITU included the setting of international telecommunications standards. Thus, in recognition of the climate targets established in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, it had adopted a recommendation detailing the emission reduction trajectories needed to cut the ICT sector’s greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent.

27. To achieve the goals of universal connectivity and access to new technologies, he emphasized the importance of infrastructure, investment, innovation and inclusiveness. In that connection, given the cross-sectoral nature of ICT, investment should be guided by government strategy.

28. **Ms. Russell** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)), panellist, said that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic had created a global education crisis. More must be done to keep schools open and children learning, including making vaccines available for teachers and school staff a priority. Helping children recover their lost education would require a comprehensive and coordinated approach that included pooling resources and investing in the countries that were the furthest behind. Schools also needed help to meet children’s needs for physical and emotional well-being, and more must be done to reach the most marginalized children, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where education

disruptions had left up to 70 per cent of 10-year-olds unable to read.

29. UNICEF was a founding partner of the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility. In Pakistan, it had worked closely with the Government to launch a tele-education channel, and in Afghanistan it had joined forces with non-governmental organizations to expand community-based learning in remote areas, especially for girls. UNICEF was using digital tools in a wide range of applications, including for real-time monitoring of the pandemic and pandemic-related needs, child protection case management, cash transfer programmes and online education. It was partnering with ITU and others to connect every school to the Internet; had developed a digital learning platform in collaboration with Microsoft; used blockchain technology for fundraising and resource mobilization; and was working closely with the private sector to develop artificial intelligence-powered products that could improve education for children with disabilities.

30. **Mr. Al-Qurashi** (General Manager for International Affairs of the Communications and Information Technology Commission of Saudi Arabia and Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development), panellist, said that many stakeholders had successfully employed applications developed by the United Nations to care for COVID-19 patients and develop treatments and vaccines. However, science and technology could also be harnessed to address climate emergencies, pollution, inequality and loss of biodiversity and to provide energy, health care, mobility, food and education in a truly inclusive and sustainable way. Ensuring equal access to the benefits of science and technology in health care, mainstreaming a gender perspective and building international cooperation at the global, regional and national levels were essential both for post-pandemic recovery and for successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

31. **Mr. Hikihara** (Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Vienna and Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice), panellist, speaking via video link, said that technological innovation provided effective tools to prevent crimes and strengthen criminal justice systems, but it also provided new opportunities for criminals. The Commission played an active role in setting policy guidelines to fight new and emerging crimes, such as cybercrime, and in promoting the appropriate use of technological innovation. In that regard, the outcome document of the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice ([A/RES/76/181](#), annex) represented a major achievement. It clearly

demonstrated the shared recognition of the Commission's member States that criminal justice systems could be improved through the use of technology and the promotion of partnerships with relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, it underlined the need to strengthen international cooperation in criminal matters and promote technical assistance, and it expressed a commitment to mainstream a gender perspective in crime prevention and criminal justice systems.

32. The Commission had prepared a resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session, entitled "Strengthening criminal justice systems during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic" ([A/RES/76/184](#)). During its thirty-first regular session in May 2022, it would hold a thematic discussion on strengthening the use of digital evidence in criminal justice and countering cybercrime, including the abuse and exploitation of minors in illegal activities with the use of the Internet.

33. **Mr. Seah** (Observer for Singapore) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had sharpened the divide between the digital haves and have-nots. It was the duty of the United Nations system, including the Council and its subsidiary bodies, to try to connect the unconnected through education in digital skills and digital literacy, investment in infrastructure and expanded access to digital public goods. It was also imperative to articulate common rules and principles and to work to develop the Secretary-General's proposal for a Global Digital Compact. At the national level, Singapore had accelerated the implementation of its digital readiness plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

34. **Mr. Pildegovičs** (Latvia), drawing attention to the importance of close coordination between the New York- and Geneva-based processes on digitalization and on science, technology and innovation, said that it was important to publicize the work and potential of the underutilized Technology Facilitation Mechanism, launched in the 2030 Agenda in order to facilitate coordination and cooperation within and beyond the United Nations family. He also encouraged the relevant subsidiary bodies of the Council to reinforce their work in the promotion of digital skills, including media and information literacy. Furthermore, dedicated efforts were needed to promote gender equality in science, technology and innovation. As Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women, Latvia looked forward to the upcoming session of the Commission, which would offer an opportunity to highlight women and girls in environmental sciences.

35. **Mr. Malovrh** (Observer for Slovenia) said that United Nations bodies and entities must cooperate even more closely to build synergies for the promotion of the science, technology and innovation agenda. Slovenia had made digitalization and new technologies, especially artificial intelligence, a policy priority and was actively engaged in artificial intelligence issues in international and European forums. Slovenia was in fact home to the International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence, whose mission was to guide and consult with countries and stakeholders on artificial intelligence issues and best practices for artificial intelligence policy planning, regulation and dissemination. The Centre promoted a human-centric, ethical standard-based approach with a view to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals in an open and collaborative manner. Recently, the Centre had been involved in the preparation of the recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in November 2021. In collaboration with the Centre, Slovenia was planning a series of events in 2022 that would focus on artificial intelligence solutions for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

36. **Mr. Liu Liquan** (China) said that broad cooperation on science, technology and innovation was required to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve robust economic recovery. Recognizing the power of science, technology and innovation to promote sustainable development, China had emphasized connectivity and the digital economy in the global development initiative launched by its President during the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. To maximize the recovery and development potential of science, technology and information, the United Nations should play a coordinating role and should foster an open, equitable and non-discriminatory environment in that area. It was important to promote macro policy coordination, experience-sharing, digital cooperation, digital infrastructure, universal Internet access and the digital economy. In addition, it was essential to uphold the principle of wide consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits in areas of global concern and to strengthen the capacities of developing countries in science, technology and innovation.

37. **Ms. González Carrillo** (Chile), noting that more than 1,600 activities related to science, technology and innovation had been identified within the United Nations system, said that it was necessary to eliminate overlaps and improve coordination among those mechanisms in order to sharpen complementary with non-United Nations initiatives. In view of the need to

overcome inequalities in access to technology and technological capacity, Chile attached particular importance to the work of the United Nations system in the area of gender and technology. To support efforts to promote digital gender equality, it had organized the Regional Alliance for Women's Digitalization in Latin America and the Caribbean.

38. **Ms. Juárez Argueta** (Guatemala) said that digital platforms offered opportunities to generate income, provide training and enhance the delivery of social services. It was therefore vital to increase the support available to States to improve Internet connectivity and technology access, including in the area of health care. Guatemala considered local initiatives critical to boost the use of technology among women and indigenous peoples, and she would welcome the panellists' thoughts on that subject.

39. **Mr. Dev Nath** (Bangladesh) said that, in view of the substantial inequalities in science, technology and innovation between and within countries, he would appreciate the panellists' recommendations on how to close the research and development, gender and other gaps. He also wished to know what could be done to build more effective partnerships in digital education, including in higher education.

40. **Mr. Zhao Houlin** (Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)), speaking via video link, said that, even in the least developed countries, entrepreneurs were designing and marketing technology solutions to meet local demand. With that in mind, while ITU had traditionally worked with large companies, it was endeavouring to engage small- and medium-sized enterprises in international standards development in order to help to close the ICT gap between developed and developing countries. In regard to the gender gap, ITU had launched International Girls in ICT Day to encourage girls and young women to study and pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In addition, ITU included the gender issue on the agendas of all its conferences and regularly encouraged member States to select women to represent them. Unfortunately, the percentage of women participants remained low.

41. While substantial progress had been made towards many of the goals agreed during the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, most had been only partially met. Fortunately, enough progress had been made to have enabled social, cultural and economic life to continue through the pandemic, despite the lockdowns. Nevertheless, in view of the almost 3 million people who remained unconnected, government, industry and business must work together

to continue to support ICT development. In that connection, rather than allowing companies to act on their own, it would be more efficient and beneficial for States to adopt national strategies for building an inclusive ICT infrastructure.

42. **Ms. Russell** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that children needed help to overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many had missed up to two years of school, and children living in poverty, crisis or conflict faced even greater challenges. In one country, as many as 35 per cent of children had not returned to school. There were tools and technologies to reach every child, but there must also be the will. UNICEF would work with its partners in every sector to drive innovation and investment. However, States must commit the effort and resources needed to overcome the global learning crisis together.

43. **Mr. Al-Qurashi** (General Manager for International Affairs of the Communications and Information Technology Commission of Saudi Arabia and Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development) said that the international community needed to take an inclusive and holistic approach to science and technology. Thanks to the redesigned coordination segment, States would find it easier to arrive at a shared and action-focused new vision of how science and technology could deliver better development outcomes while protecting and promoting global values. He looked forward to the participation of other entities in the work of the Commission and encouraged delegations to continue sharing ideas and exploring ways to strengthen the capabilities and capacities of developing countries.

44. **Mr. Hikihara** (Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Vienna and Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice), speaking via video link, said that cybercrime made strengthening global coordination more necessary than ever. The Commission would continue to serve as a focal point for close international collaboration.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.