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High-level segment

Summary record of the 32nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 18 July 2022, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Kelapile (Botswana)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment on building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (*continued*)
(E/2022/57)

(b) High-level policy dialogue, including future trends and scenarios related to the Council theme and the long-term impact of current trends (E/2022/58 and E/2022/60)

1. **The President** said that technological, climate and demographic modelling offered empirically backed scenarios that helped to imagine different futures. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda” (A/75/982), it was therefore necessary to adopt long-term policies and engage in multilateral collaboration to build back better, implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and expand sustainable development well beyond 2030.

2. **Mr. Liu Zhenmin** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that foresight and preparedness were both a science and an art. In the Anthropocene era, actions and reactions were felt at the planetary scale. Phenomena such as population ageing, climate change and technological evolution interacted with sudden shocks such as pandemics and wars to produce unexpected outcomes. It was challenging but urgently necessary to make sense of such complex interactions with a view to developing adequate policies. Although it was impossible to know for certain what shock would arrive next, the international community must invest in enhancing its forecasting abilities. Thankfully, it had vast amounts of data, improved analytical capacity and established forums for dialogue at its disposal.

3. The Department for Economic and Social Affairs collected standardized data and disseminated global statistics. It was also involved in innovative work with big data through the United Nations World Data Forum. Moreover, its work with geospatial information systems enhanced national capacities to work with such data sets and develop more nuanced models for sustainable development. Despite major improvements in recent years, data gaps remained in all Sustainable Development Goal areas. It was necessary to strengthen national statistical capacities in developing countries to improve strategic foresight at all levels.

4. The Department prepared a number of annual reports that provided demographic statistics that were the bedrock of all scenario-building. In the World

Population Prospects report for 2022, it was estimated that, by the end of the year, the global population would reach 8 billion. In the World Social Report, to be issued later in 2022, the Department examined the socioeconomic impact of population ageing in order to inform policy work with the National Transfer Accounts project, a group of research institutions designed to support decision-makers in over 90 countries. Every year, the Department issued its flagship report, World Economic Situation and Prospects, to lay out near-term expectations based on intensive country-level modelling. Other work done by the Department on energy, technological change and sustainable development likewise relied heavily on modelling. Strong technical skills were necessary in that line of work, but it was also important to engage with policy-makers, civil society and other stakeholders to bring about change.

Interactive discussion: “Looking ahead: acting today to secure a better future”

5. **Mr. Najam** (Dean Emeritus and Professor of International Relations and Earth and Environment, Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University), moderator, said that the international community must look ahead in order to gauge preparedness with regard to likely developments and think about creating a better future. The window of action to effect change by 2030 was closing. He urged stakeholders to broaden their vision to examine what shadow the year 2030 would cast on future generations.

6. **Mr. Rao** (Associate Professor of Energy Systems, Yale School of the Environment, and Senior Research Scholar, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis), panellist, said that he was concerned about the significant disconnect between the current global direction and the actions necessary to stabilize climate change and achieve equality and the Sustainable Development Goals. In its sixth assessment report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had noted that, in the decade prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, emissions had been the highest ever; while emissions had dropped at the height of the pandemic, they were now increasing again and the world was on track to exceed the temperature thresholds agreed upon in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

7. Although low-income poverty had decreased significantly in recent years, living standards had been slow to increase, especially with regard to access to clean-burning cooking equipment, water, sanitation, adequate shelter and motorized transport. Most of the economic growth of the previous few decades had in

fact increased affluence without improving general living standards.

8. However, recent research had shown that climate change stabilization and poverty eradication were mutually compatible. The energy growth needed to provide decent living standards for all would require only a fraction of a single year's global energy demand. Half of the energy needed to raise living standards was required to build safe housing and transport infrastructure, mostly in emerging cities in developing countries. In low- and middle-income countries, the most important low-carbon poverty eradication measures were increasing public transport, bolstering public housing with sustainable materials and promoting food diversity. Prioritizing those basic services using shared resources would actually reduce emission growth.

9. The Panel had shown in its report that, in industrialized countries, there was high potential for reducing emissions by making demand-side changes. The war in Ukraine had been a wake-up call with regard to oil dependency. Energy demands must be reduced by improving building conditions, encouraging conservation and subsidizing efficient appliances such as heat pumps. For instance, if Europeans lowered their thermostats at home by one degree in winter, they could eliminate one month of Russian gas imports. Lowering meat consumption, telecommuting, building smaller homes, buying smaller cars, recycling and sharing items were other consumption choices that could help to lower energy demands.

10. National progress indicators should take into account not only economic growth but also well-being and its environmental impacts. Policymakers should seek to better understand the gaps in Sustainable Development Goal achievement and why living standards were improving so slowly compared to rates of affluence. If growth was achieved equitably using shared resources, well-being could be improved while reducing energy growth and mitigating climate change.

11. **Ms. Hasegawa** (Associate Professor, College of Science and Engineering, Ritsumeikan University, Japan), panellist, said that, although rapid climate action was needed, stringent climate mitigation policies posed the risk of increasing global hunger if applied uniformly across all sectors and regions. Negative impacts could be caused by conflicts between high food prices and lower income levels, as well as the energy needed for certain crops. It was therefore important to handle sectors such as agriculture independently, consider the potential adverse impacts of climate mitigation policies

and implement complementary measures to reduce those impacts.

12. While global hunger had decreased until 2014, it had since been increasing owing to the global economic downturn, conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic. The world was not on track to achieve the “zero hunger” target of the Sustainable Development Goals. The solution to global hunger that was often proffered was to increase food production: however, that approach could pose environmental risks related to land development, deforestation, and increased water and fertilizer use. Her team had shown through its research that, if food consumption worldwide increased to the current level of food consumption in developed countries without improvements in the food distribution system, food production would increase by 20 per cent. On the contrary, if intensive food support targeting only the poor was combined with policies to reduce the adverse environmental effects of food production, such production would drop by 9 per cent, thus limiting the negative environmental impact. Integrated strategies must therefore be developed to meet food needs, improve unequal food distribution, and reduce food loss and overconsumption.

13. It had been estimated that extreme climate events would cause an additional 11 to 36 per cent of the global population to face hunger by 2050. Although the current global reserve was quantitatively sufficient to address even the worst scenarios, many regional food reserves would be insufficient. For example, in South Asia, the amount of food needed to offset food insecurity resulting from extreme climate events would be equivalent to three times the region's food reserves. Therefore, targeted food support should be provided to the poor, countries should invest in domestic food reserves, and the international community should contribute to international food aid and trade.

14. **Ms. Tapanainen-Thiess** (Secretary-General, Government Report on the Future and Government Foresight Group, Office of the Prime Minister of Finland), panellist, said that, for almost thirty years, Finland had been making future-oriented decisions and examining the drivers of change. Since 1993, the Government Report on the Future had been submitted during each government term. All 12 ministries contributed to the report and engaged in scenario work to examine the future up to 2040. Since 2017, the Committee for the Future had also examined the implementation of the 2030 Agenda during each term. In addition, 50 dialogues had been held with citizens around the country to support preparedness and draft alternative development plans.

15. Cross-governmental foresight work supported continuous learning within ministries and helped to ensure that different generations would receive fair and equal treatment. Scenario work resulted in possible development paths rather than predictions of the future; it was useful to question existing assumptions and rehearse for the future. Decisions that had been pre-tested against alternative futures were more likely to stand the test of time and produce robust and resilient strategies. Alternative scenarios should protect sustainable growth and the funding base of the welfare society, while mitigating climate change, combating biodiversity loss, promoting peace, stability, well-being, democracy and human rights, and ensuring that the transition to a low-carbon economy was equitable. The result of scenario planning was not a more accurate picture of the future, but rather better thinking in the present and an ongoing strategic conversation.

16. **Ms. Van der Elst** (Director-General, Policy Horizons Canada, Government of Canada), lead discussant, speaking via video link, said that achieving the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda would require international solidarity, multilateralism and global action. The framework of the 2030 Agenda rested on the assumption that the Sustainable Development Goals could only be achieved with a vast level of technological development shared across an open world. Although that was one desirable future, it was important to prepare for all possible futures, including the emergence of significant geo-technological competition.

17. It was also important to consider the potential unintended consequences of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which would rely heavily on technological innovation and implementation. Greater technological dependency also meant greater dependency on infrastructure that could break down. Lastly, futures that did not necessarily align with the open and solidarity-based framework envisioned in the 2030 Agenda must be considered.

18. **Ms. Patterson** (Director of Sustainable Development Goal Integration, Global Policy Network of the United Nations Development Programme), lead discussant, said that the world faced a choice between collective action and collective suicide, as stated by the Secretary-General with regard to climate action. It was not sufficient to accelerate forward: the world must imagine possibilities and build infrastructures of connection that allowed for investment in the necessary actions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations Development Programme had worked on a COVID impact initiative using future scenarios elaborated by cross-disciplinary policy experts. One scenario had represented the current COVID baseline,

playing forward the impacts of the pandemic on poverty, hunger, and the economy up to 2050. A high-damage scenario had accounted for higher mortality rates and a more protracted economic impact. In a third scenario, efforts had been concentrated on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through the adoption of 48 ambitious but proven policy measures; the final results had outperformed the expected trajectory prior to the pandemic.

19. No return to 2019 was possible or desirable: scenarios should be created to envision different possibilities and the various potential trade-offs implied by the 2030 Agenda. Science had shown that, when people looked 10 years into the future, they were more creative and optimistic than when looking at the present. It was therefore critical to maintain an evidence-driven but hopeful outlook. The research conducted by the United Nations Development Programme was available to all, based on the principle of democratic access to future scenarios. Consideration not only of international averages but also of national realities offered the best chance of engaging in meaningful and purpose-led action.

20. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Engagement, Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance), lead discussant, said that, according to the 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer, people were armed and angry in many parts of his country, the United States of America, with 6 out of 10 people stating that distrust was their default attitude. Around the world, 64 per cent of people stated that they could not engage in a civil conversation with individuals with whom they disagreed. In order to recover from the pandemic while implementing the 2030 Agenda, it was therefore necessary to counter discontent, disenfranchisement, distrust and disengagement by disrupting precedents. The global community must embrace discomfort and abandon older models that had not worked. Following the example set by the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme at the international meeting entitled “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity”, held in June 2022, it was necessary to use language that disrupted the status quo and engaged all members of the public in creating the future.

21. **Mr. González Reyes** (Director of the National Council for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Mexico), lead discussant, speaking via video link, said that most of the inequalities revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic dated back to the era of colonization and had been exacerbated by four decades of rapacious greed and indiscriminate deregulation. As poverty and inequality persisted, the world’s ability to

reach the most vulnerable in times of crisis was dwindling.

22. The Government of Mexico had decided to put the poor first. To generate the necessary resources, it had eliminated excessive operating costs and regained control of public resources that had been co-opted for private ends. Through dialogue, the Government ensured that companies paid their fair share of taxes. It had also made enhancements to education and health infrastructures in remote areas and improved agricultural practices by promoting agroecology. Mexico supported a just global transition to sustainable development, one that would allow for different national responses based on historical responsibilities and existing capacities that varied significantly between countries of the global North and South. Solidarity, justice and equity would be necessary to address the differing burdens and debt of different countries. The biggest challenge was ideological and political, not technological: States must recover their ability to guarantee the well-being of their populations, especially during times of crisis.

23. **Mr. Abdullah** (Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia), ministerial respondent, speaking via video link, said that the major challenges facing the world were climate change, technology and reforming the international architecture. Currently, the international architecture was neither inclusive nor fair and thus resulted in many imbalances. Technology could prompt Governments and legislation to evolve. As a consequence of the pandemic, new kinds of work had emerged and employers had been forced to adapt. Changes would continue to occur, with job hopping, part-time employment and multiple jobs becoming the new normal.

24. The Sustainable Development Goals represented the most comprehensive document agreed upon globally, but it was important to localize the Goals at the grass-roots level so they did not seem like an alien concept developed by the United Nations. The Goals were embedded in the twelfth, and would be embedded in the thirteenth, Malaysia Plan. In addition, Malaysia had an all-party parliamentary group that was composed of 30 members of Parliament and assisted with bringing the Goals to all corners of the country.

25. **Ms. Kereng** (Minister of Environment, Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism of Botswana), ministerial respondent, said that the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic had illustrated the need to incorporate resilience in all policies, laws and plans. Botswana needed to look within itself before turning to external resources. Her Government sought to engage in

policy and legal reforms that were resilient and transformative, and had political support, with a view to refocusing national development priorities. During the pandemic, it had embarked on an economic recovery plan to rationalize ministries, harmonize sectors, reprioritize budgeting and target key sectors for job growth. Government accountability, inclusivity and popular support were essential.

26. Botswana was promoting the sustainable use of natural resources to create jobs and fight against poverty. It was also investing in research and development to find home-grown solutions. People must be at the centre of environmental protection efforts. While capacity-building would be useful in the future, it was first necessary for her country to establish linkages internally between young people, women, civil society, the private sector, research and academia. The Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda provided all the necessary components for transformative change, but Botswana must first strengthen its protections, services and systems locally before engaging in the international space.

27. **Mr. Smyth** (Minister of State for the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Public Procurement, eGovernment with special responsibility for Communications and Circular Economy of Ireland), ministerial respondent, said that, during the pandemic, fear and insufficient scientific knowledge had led to the introduction of many single-use packaging products. His Government's response had been to pass a circular economy law that allowed for the taxation or prohibition of such products. That law had been based on a law that had been adopted twenty years previously to tax plastic bags and that had reduced the use of such bags by 95 per cent. Businesses were resistant to the circular economy law, which would force them to segregate their waste. However, such changes presented huge opportunities for innovation, sustainable development and social inclusion.

28. It was necessary to address the inequalities in the traditional linear economy, wherein the global North relied on products extracted from mines in the global South – causing many social and human rights issues as well as environmental damage – and then shipped its waste back to the global South for processing. In a circular economy, waste was treated as a resource rather than a burden. Removing dependency on single-use products was a path to sustainable prosperity.

29. **Mr. Poudel Chhetri** (Nepal) said that, if poor countries engaged in lower crop production to mitigate the effects of climate change, famine and poverty would ensue. He therefore asked whether reduced crop

production was to be implemented only in developed, rich countries, or also in poor countries.

30. **Mr. Rao** (Associate Professor of Energy Systems, Yale School of the Environment, and Senior Research Scholar, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis) said that future scenario exercises were valuable only if they accurately represented current realities; it was therefore necessary to enhance capacities to take into account the local conditions of underrepresented populations and countries.

31. **Ms. Hasegawa** (Associate Professor, College of Science and Engineering, Ritsumeikan University, Japan) said that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would require integrated strategies that considered the impact of policies on each other. With regard to ending hunger, large inequalities in resource and income distribution undermined access to food for the poor. Therefore, implementing effective social protection policies would be key to ending hunger. Given the global insecurity caused by extreme climate events, conflict and war, it was urgent to develop such strategies.

32. **Ms. Tapanainen-Thiess** (Secretary-General, Government Report on the Future and Government Foresight Group, Office of the Prime Minister of Finland) said that, while capacity differences were significant, they should not prevent countries from engaging in foresight work. In Finland, such work had been conducted even though the capacities of the different ministries varied significantly. It was necessary to understand the big picture, including interdependencies and drivers of change, alternative policy options and systemic risks. Finland had looked at a wide variety of factors when engaging in foresight work, including uneven demographic development, education, migration, spatial segregation, and mental health and well-being.

33. **Ms. Patterson** (Director of Sustainable Development Goal Integration, Global Policy Network of the United Nations Development Programme) said that the 2030 Agenda was a radical programme for transformation that was more than the sum of its goals and indicators. It was a global systems agenda with a focus on interdependencies and the spaces between them. Stakeholders should use qualitative and quantitative methods to identify leverage points in different contexts. It was important to focus on the small number of investments that had the best chance of effecting change across different development sectors and contexts.

34. **Mr. Chindawongse** (Thailand) said that, while countries had the necessary data in terms of strategic

foresight to identify trends, many still needed to establish early warning systems, with all their budgetary, political and economic implications. He asked panellists how countries could engage in early warning systems at the multilateral level in a way that would galvanize action.

35. **Mr. Johnson** (International Anti-Corruption Academy) said that significant loss of life could have been avoided during the pandemic if better governance and anti-corruption measures had been in place. Bribes had been used for a wide variety of reasons, ranging from avoiding quarantine to gaining access to ventilators. In the education sector, for instance, some mothers had been forced to pay to keep their children in school.

36. Corruption had far-reaching negative effects on society. It deepened gender inequalities, generally affecting women more negatively than men. In order to make progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 14, it must be recognized that the fisheries sector was particularly vulnerable to illegal and unregulated activity. In addition, corruption was a key enabler of wildlife crime. Fighting corruption was not a stand-alone goal, and the achievement of Goal 17, on partnerships, was therefore critical to implementing the 2030 Agenda. Corruption undermined progress towards the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals and anti-corruption efforts were the driving force of sustainable development.

37. **Ms. Tapanainen-Thiess** (Secretary-General, Government Report on the Future and Government Foresight Group, Office of the Prime Minister of Finland) said that, in establishing early warning systems, it was important to understand the megatrends at play. Uncertainties must be analysed when deciding upon alternative pathways, and foresight must be institutionalized to close gaps in knowledge. To respond to black swan events, highly developed capacities were required.

38. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Engagement, Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance) asked whether societies were willing to take the time necessary to rebuild trust with their people and invest in the social pillar.

39. **Mr. Rao** (Associate Professor of Energy Systems, Yale School of the Environment, and Senior Research Scholar, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis) said that the most urgent action to take was to focus on addressing inequalities, especially with regard to resource access and decision-making power.

40. **Ms. Hasegawa** (Associate Professor, College of Science and Engineering, Ritsumeikan University,

Japan) said that uniformly applied measures would negatively affect some populations and lack effectiveness. More sector- and region-specific measures were necessary to address climate change and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

41. **Ms. Tapanainen-Thiess** (Secretary-General, Government Report on the Future and Government Foresight Group, Office of the Prime Minister of Finland) said that society must be founded on high standards of education, training, research and culture. To preserve the welfare society, it was necessary to ensure a human-centric operating culture in which goals and services were defined by citizens.

(a) Ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (continued)

Adoption of the draft ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2022 session of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Council (E/2022/L.14-E/HLPF/2022/L.1)

42. **The President** drew attention to the draft ministerial declaration of the 2022 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Council, on the theme “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (E/2022/L.14-E/HLPF/2022/L.1). A recorded vote had been requested on paragraph 131 of the draft ministerial declaration.

43. *A recorded vote was taken on paragraph 131 of the draft ministerial declaration.*

In favour:

Argentina, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, China, Greece, India, Indonesia, Libya, Madagascar, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Russian Federation, Solomon Islands, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Canada, Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Guatemala, Japan, Latvia, New Zealand, Portugal.

44. *Paragraph 131 of the draft ministerial declaration was adopted by 20 votes to 3, with 15 abstentions.*

45. **Mr. Kamar** (Israel) said that, while Israel supported the draft ministerial declaration as a whole, it dissociated itself from paragraph 131 and reiterated the statement that it had delivered with respect to the vote on that paragraph at the 16th meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council.

46. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft ministerial declaration, which had no programme budget implications.

47. *The draft ministerial declaration was adopted.*

48. **Mr. Hill** (United States of America) said that the United States strongly supported the 2030 Agenda and was committed to its full implementation.

49. **Mr. Nasir** (Indonesia) said that multilateral action would be essential to mitigate the current multidimensional crisis. The world must act urgently to reverse the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine on food security and energy. It was also important to invest in universal health care and pandemic preparedness, and to bridge the gap in financing for development.

Closing of the segment

50. **Mr. Liu Zhenmin** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that it was clear that the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals continued to inspire, unite and mobilize the international community. The Sustainable Development Goal Summit, to be held in September 2022, and its preparatory actions would usher in a new phase of acceleration and transformation.

51. At its 31st meeting, held that morning, the Council had considered ways of improving multilateralism, the public health response to the pandemic, finance and debt relief, and ways of mitigating climate change and ensuring social protections. At the current meeting, the Council had examined a variety of future scenarios and what the international community could do to improve them. Although the Secretary-General, in his report on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2022/55), had revealed the devastating impact of the pandemic on the achievement of many of the Goals, the Council had also seen signs of continued progress, as evidenced by the 44 voluntary national reviews, the ministerial round table and its various panels and dialogues. However, the system, whose weaknesses had been illustrated by the recent crises, must be transformed, and an inclusive, sustained and green transition must be endorsed. If the world was appraised

of the demographic, social and environmental changes that it would face in the years ahead, it would be better placed to anticipate them and make the necessary policy changes ahead of time. It was therefore encouraging that the ministerial declaration had been adopted by consensus.

52. **The President** said that the ministerial declaration provided a solid basis and good political guidance for the international community to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises while working towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The high-level segment marked the culmination of the Council's year of work, during which it had addressed different aspects of the pandemic and other crises that had negatively impacted livelihoods. International solidarity had emerged as the only way to implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve the Goals.

53. The Committee for Development Policy would ensure that global rules were calibrated to achieve the overarching goals of social and economic stability, shared prosperity and environmental sustainability. A strengthened multilateral system was necessary to elaborate solutions at the scale required to respond to current major challenges, including looming food and energy crises. Such a system would also support the poorest and most vulnerable countries and people, and those most affected by crises. Solidarity also entailed enhancing collective efforts to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, going beyond the limited but important success that had been achieved at the World Trade Organization.

54. The proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Our Common Agenda" ([A/75/982](#)) must be pursued in order to revitalize multilateralism and international cooperation. The Council would continue to follow up on the issues that fell within its mandate, including the Biennial Summit to be held in 2023 between it and the Group of 20, the Secretary-General and heads of international financial institutions. It would also further review youth engagement, building on lessons learned during its annual youth forum. It was critical for all Permanent Missions in New York to mobilize leaders and ministries in their capitals to implement the important agreements reached at the United Nations, with a view to making multilateralism impactful.

55. At the current meeting, scientists had presented different scenarios for realizing a sustainable future; scenarios served to highlight opportunities for more resilient trajectories that addressed existing and potential crises, reduced inequalities and achieved the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, scenarios

were critical tools for making sound policy decisions by supporting policymakers in their attempts to look beyond current crises and emergencies towards sustainable development. Government representatives had also described how they were using scenarios and long-term trend analysis to formulate future-oriented policy measures and programmes. They had stressed that long-term planning and foresight were extremely difficult in the current context. Scientists and policymakers must therefore collaborate to ensure a better science-policy interface. In addition, the United Nations system must urgently support capacity-building in developing countries, especially those in special situations.

56. The situation was neither helpless nor hopeless: much of the knowledge, and many of the policy options, tools and instruments, needed to achieve sustainable development already existed. To make further progress, it was necessary to mobilize finance and the power of science and technology and bolster local, national and global solidarity for collective actions. Multilateralism was key to transforming existing socioeconomic systems to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.