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Chair: Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 19: Follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/77/310)

Agenda item 23: Operational activities for development

(a) Operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/77/69-E/2022/47 and A/77/69/Add.1-E/2022/47/Add.1)

(b) South-South cooperation for development (A/77/297)

1. **Mr. Williams** (Director, New York Office, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/77/310), said that the New Urban Agenda was not a stand-alone agenda but rather a road map for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals, advancing the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and promoting social cohesion essential to peacebuilding. At the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, held on 28 April 2022, 87 Member States, the regional groups of Africa, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union and the Group of 77 and China had made that clear.

2. The President's summary of the high-level meeting and the annex of actions set out Member States' commitments to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda through actions on housing, finance, climate, localization, and crisis recovery. The report also highlighted the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum, held in Katowice, Poland, in June. With a huge online participation and significant in-person attendance, it had been among the most inclusive, accessible, and climate-neutral international forums of its kind.

3. The United Nations system-wide strategy for sustainable urbanization applied a whole-of-system approach to assist countries in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda by calling on United Nations entities to work through existing inter-agency processes at the global, regional and country levels.

4. In its recommendations, the report of the Secretary-General urged Member States to build upon the momentum created by the high-level meeting of the

General Assembly to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The recommendations focused on adequate housing; harnessing sustainable urban development to promote climate action, protect biodiversity, and reduce pollution; and multilevel governance and localization, which would be a determining factor in how the Goals were achieved. How cities responded to crises would be key to reduction and recovery at the national level.

5. Lastly, strengthened municipal finance and local fiscal systems, and effective land use management, as clearly outlined in the New Urban Agenda, were best suited to provide the foundation for financing sustainable infrastructure and basic services.

6. **Ms. Barthélemy** (Director, Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/233 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/77/69-E/2022/47) and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/233 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system: funding of the United Nations development system (A/77/69/Add.1-E/2022/47/Add.1), said that ambitious reforms of the United Nations development system over the past four years had made it better prepared to assist countries in responding to current crises and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations had been chosen as a preferred development partner by 70 per cent of Governments, far ahead of other multilateral and regional institutions. Resident coordinators' leadership and focus on common results had improved, and Governments largely agreed that country teams were working more collaboratively. Significant progress had been made on integrating United Nations regional assets, the commitment to multi-country offices had been operationalized and all United Nations country teams had business operations strategies in place ahead of schedule.

7. Nonetheless, a greater effort must be made to deliver the breadth of support developing countries needed to achieve the Goals amidst the current crises and to ensure that regional issue-based coalitions provided responsive integrated support based on country-level demands. The establishment of common premises and common back offices was lagging behind, and no progress had been made towards the 30 per cent target for core funding, which had registered a decrease

since 2019. Funding for the resident coordinator system also continued to fall short of needs. Fully delivering on the commitments made in the funding compact was essential to ensure adequate integrated United Nations support for achieving the Goals.

8. The report recommended cross-cutting levers of change such as further strengthening the expertise of United Nations country teams to deliver integrated support to countries transitioning in energy, food systems and digital connectivity; using the Organization's convening role to help Governments attract partnerships, know-how, financing and development solutions on an unprecedented scale; and completing the reforms, including on business operations' efficiency, delivery of regional expertise to the country level, and providing coherent support to humanitarian, development and security needs. The report also recommended accelerating the behavioural changes required to maximize the development system's collective offer, including through the revised management and accountability framework, and fully delivering on funding compact commitments, starting with the full funding of the resident coordinator system. The continuing strategic guidance and support of Member States was needed to achieve those ends.

9. **Ms. Wang** Xiaojun Grace (Trust Fund Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the state of South-South cooperation ([A/77/297](#)), said that during the global response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, developing countries had increasingly supported one another on a multilateral basis through South-South and triangular cooperation, including with regard to vaccine access and equitable distribution. However, as a result of the broad and long-term impact of the pandemic and other crises, developing countries faced further shortfalls in financing towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Access to development finance on concessional terms for developing countries should be scaled up and improved, including through Southern-based development banks.

10. The pandemic had accelerated the digital transition from on-site to online collaborative platforms, increasing the reach of South-South and triangular cooperation. However, the digitization divide was large, which meant that technology-driven foreign direct investment among developing countries was still relatively small. To overcome those challenges, South-South and triangular cooperation needed a wider base of actors that embraced digital technologies, including through the voluntary sharing of licences, technologies and know-how. The transfer of technology to the global

South along with home-grown innovation could introduce scientific innovations to the most vulnerable, especially the least developed countries.

11. In the follow-up to the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, South-South cooperation had become well entrenched in the operational activities of the United Nations development system. In 2021, several United Nations entities had expanded their programme portfolios of South-South and triangular cooperation; enhanced digital networks for knowledge-sharing, codifying good practices and brokering partnerships; advanced policymaking; and promoted the development, transfer and dissemination of technologies to developing countries. A large number had included South-South cooperation in their strategic framework or planning and programming instruments, and the number of entities with a unit dedicated to South-South cooperation had increased. However, as of December 2021, three out of five entities had yet to allocate a budget for South-South and triangular cooperation activities.

12. Operationalization of the United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development had begun in 2021. Under the United Nations Inter-Agency Mechanism for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation had coordinated the preparation of a monitoring framework and streamlined data collection to track progress in the implementation of the strategy. Efforts were also under way to support integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks at the country level, as appropriate, in line with General Assembly resolution [76/221](#).

13. The South-South cooperation trust funds managed by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation had enabled the United Nations system to provide support to South-South cooperation initiatives on the ground, including fast-tracking and delivering over \$12 million to over 30 countries to support immediate responses to the pandemic and mitigate its socioeconomic impact.

14. The report recommended that United Nations entities further strengthen their institutional capacities and allocate adequate human and financial resources in support of South-South cooperation; continue to support Member States in strengthening institutional capacities to plan and manage South-South and triangular cooperation; and support South-South cooperation initiatives at the country level under the leadership of resident coordinators.

15. In the report, the Secretary-General welcomed the Ministerial Conference to be held in connection with the forthcoming Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and expressed full support for ministerial dialogues, including at the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Global South-South Development Expo, to examine the contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and make recommendations on priority areas for United Nations system support.

16. The report also recommended further integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into resolutions, particularly in those areas where it could significantly catalyse the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and address climate, food and energy crises with a clear focus on women, children, and youth, leaving no one behind. Policy guidance by the Second Committee on advancing South-South and triangular cooperation for the achievement of the Goals would be welcome.

17. Lastly, in the report, the Secretary-General called on Member States and partners to scale-up contributions to the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation and other relevant financing mechanisms to enable the United Nations development system to advance South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives championed by developing countries with sufficient resources. That included a proposal to establish a triangular cooperation funding window under the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation.

18. **Ms. Larue** (Dominican Republic) asked Mr. Williams how the reinvigorated resident coordinator system had contributed to the work of UN-Habitat and how regional offices could be further strengthened.

19. **Ms. Chimbiri Molande** (Malawi) asked how the United Nations system could help countries like Malawi to implement the New Urban Agenda and ensure that standardization of urban housing was truly resilient to climate change. With rural development lagging behind, perhaps Mr. Williams could also comment on measures to address the needs of rural dwellers flocking to urban areas in search of a better livelihood.

20. **Mr. Williams** (Director, New York Office, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), replying to the representative of the Dominican Republic, said that the resident coordinator system, under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General with support from the Development Coordination Office, had been working closely with UN-Habitat to develop joint urban programming in cooperation

frameworks across the board, and to ensure their implementation. Coordination with the resident coordinator system had previously centred on ensuring that urban development and housing were an outcome of cooperation frameworks. However, following a series of consultations with resident coordinators at the 2020 and 2022 sessions of the World Urban Forum, the focus had shifted to the development of joint urban programming, with a view to achieving multiple outcomes of cooperation frameworks tailored to the issues prioritized by individual countries; for example, climate change or poverty eradication. The Development Coordination Office and UN-Habitat had recently launched a joint programme with 29 resident coordinators, 29 country teams and 3 multi-country offices to explore those new approaches and determine how best to apply urban planning and policy.

21. Replying to the representative of Malawi, he said that the housing and infrastructure issues to which she had referred were a major concern in both the global North and South and had been a recurring theme at the high level meeting to assess progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Every effort was being made to minimize the environmental impact of housing construction through the use of appropriate technology and building materials, including repurposed materials. UN-Habitat was working with private sector entities to that end, and to determine the sustainability of infrastructure investments.

22. The effect of urbanization on rural development was important not only for Malawi but also for other Member States. The most aggressive urbanization often took place not in big cities but rather in small rural districts and towns. For example, in some East African towns, the population had swelled from 5,000 to 50,000 and even 100, 000 inhabitants. Thus, the question became how best to strengthen those smaller towns and work with them on governance, infrastructure and job opportunities in agricultural production such as food processing and other decentralized activities that could be carried out in smaller towns rather than capital cities.

23. **Mr. Ramos de Alencar da Costa** (Brazil) asked Mr. Williams how the growth of urban centres could be managed to ensure that fertile agricultural land was not lost, and that urban growth would not drag down agricultural production in the developing world.

24. **Mr. Williams** (Director, New York Office, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), replying to the representative of Brazil, said that urban sprawl was a major challenge as people continued to pour into cities and the cities themselves spread ever outward. The prevention of harm to biodiversity and

agricultural production in surrounding areas would be explored at the forthcoming meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Canada. For the first time, UN-Habitat had been invited to participate in the Conference and speak to that question.

25. Currently, smallholder food production was dominant in much of sub-Saharan Africa and South and South-East Asia. The rise of large-scale agribusiness and larger farms raised the question not merely of whether agricultural land, but also of which livelihoods, would be preserved. The most suitable type of agricultural production and the right mix of large-scale agribusiness and small-scale shareholders would have to be determined.

26. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that multiple global crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing global geopolitical tensions and the depression of global economic conditions, had disproportionately affected developing countries, further constraining the fiscal space for meeting commitments under the New Urban Agenda. Moreover, an increase in the frequency of severe climate change events and the devastation caused by climate change-related flooding and other disasters complicated the significant challenges associated with the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on cities and human settlements. The Group wished to highlight the urgent need to mobilize concessional and grant finance and increase funding for climate action, especially for adaptation. It also called for the establishment of an independent loss and damage finance facility at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

27. With the development agenda under serious threat, it was urgent to enhance multilateralism and reaffirm commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first. Unfortunately, development activities were often side-lined and did not receive the same attention and resources from the international community as other matters, such as humanitarian issues. In that regard, the Group commended the Secretary-General for his persistence in keeping the focus on development issues and working assiduously on improving the development sphere of the United Nations system.

28. As programme countries, the Group greatly appreciated the progress made thus far in the repositioned development system and the resident coordinator system. It wished to emphasize that the

United Nations development system should support the preparation of pipelines of bankable projects, an increase in production capacities and industrialization in programme countries as well as their access to concessional finance. The United Nations development system should also help strengthen the capacity of developing countries to prepare bankable projects that would mobilize large sums of private funding for the achievement of sustainable development. The Group remained concerned, however, over inadequate funding of the resident coordinator system and development activities as a whole. It therefore continued to call for more adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for the core United Nations operational activities for development that were key to achieving the Goals. Given the scarcity of funding, the entities of the United Nations development system should utilize their resources in a coordinated and efficient manner and in accordance with the national priorities, plans and policies of programme countries.

29. The pandemic had sparked an increase in South-South cooperation, which must remain a complement to, and not a substitute for, North-South cooperation, and should continue to be guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit.

30. The Group reaffirmed the need to work towards an international development cooperation system that recognized the multidimensional character of development. The United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies should take concrete measures to enhance support for South-South and triangular cooperation, which could not be measured or assessed in the same way as official development assistance (ODA), as its value went beyond direct and indirect costs. The Group therefore commended the approval of a conceptual framework by the Statistical Commission and looked forward to the further development and implementation of that framework with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as co-custodian.

31. **Mr. Edokpa** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the repositioning of the United Nations development system had led to more integrated, efficient and better-quality support tailored to countries' sustainable development needs and priorities. As its largest beneficiary, the Group welcomed the reform of the United Nations development and resident coordinator systems.

32. The central role of poverty eradication in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda could not be

emphasized enough. The Group believed that, in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, a key role to that end should be played by the reinvigorated resident coordinator system and new country teams on the front line helping programme countries to mitigate the diverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Group welcomed the new generation of cooperative operational frameworks that aligned the work of United Nations country teams with national needs and priorities with a view to advancing the 2030 Agenda and the 2063 Agenda of the African Union.

33. The Group looked forward to the redesigning of the resident coordinator recruitment process and called on the Secretary-General to ensure that it was gender-balanced and included nominations from the global South. Funding for the resident coordinator system remained a concern. While the Group was firmly in favour of assessed contributions, it encouraged donors to make multi-year commitments regarding voluntary contributions to the special purpose trust fund for the new resident coordinator system. The Group welcomed early positive signs in the funding compact and called for a determined effort to address the imbalance between core and non-core resources.

34. Regional capacity should be strengthened, and immediate regional priorities, including economic transformation, technology transfers and climate action, should be implemented through more consistent, focused and dynamically manageable programmes. In that regard, collective action, from planning to monitoring, and coherence between national and regional programmes should be reinforced to meet the goals of the 2063 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. A collaborative regional United Nations development system that could provide coherent support to Member States was urgently needed.

35. **Ms. Motsumi** (Botswana), speaking on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, said that the COVID-19 pandemic and the many other challenges the world was facing had deepened existing inequalities and created new vulnerabilities in many of the landlocked developing countries. Those countries needed greater support from UN-Habitat and the entire United Nations system to accelerate implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda. To ensure coherence, follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda should be linked to the follow-up and review of both the 2030 Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024.

36. The landlocked developing countries welcomed the Secretary-General's declared commitment to focus on the landlocked developing countries as a distinctive vulnerable group. The repositioned United Nations development system should help countries to make a transformative recovery and build their long-term resilience to future shocks. The Group therefore supported the Secretary-General's efforts to transform the United Nations development system into one that would be more responsive to their needs, especially through financing that was adequate, predictable and sufficient.

37. The Group was pleased that the new generation of resident coordinators felt more empowered and that country support frameworks were much more impactful. The resident coordinator system should continue to be leveraged to strengthen the coordination of the Vienna Programme of Action by the United Nations system at the national level in landlocked developing countries through, inter alia: strengthened collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace agendas; joint analysis, planning, programming and funding mechanisms; and cooperation between resident coordinator offices and national focal points. Coordination and support to that end should be strengthened through the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for Landlocked Developing Countries, particularly in the preparations for the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries to be held in 2024.

38. With a view to receiving greater financial and technical assistance for the Conference and for the effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, the Group looked forward to strengthened South-South and triangular cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation.

39. **Ms. St. John-Sebastian** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed goals would continue to be slowed by the long-term economic and financial impacts of COVID-19, coupled with climate change, which for small island developing States, was a fight for survival. At a time when multilateralism and urgent and adequate assistance to those furthest behind, especially small island developing States, was more important than ever, the world was witnessing regression to nationalism and protectionism.

40. The Alliance welcomed the establishment of the North Pacific Multi-Country Office in the Federated States of Micronesia and the assignment of additional

coordination officers in several countries covered by multi-country offices. It also hailed much-needed efforts to make resident coordinators more fit-for-purpose by enhancing their skill sets and the tools available to them and widening the pool of potential resident coordinator candidates to include individuals outside the United Nations system and across the various entities of the United Nations development system. The Alliance hoped that that would include the smaller agencies as well. The proposal to recruit individuals from small island developing States and those with specific experience and relevant expertise in that area would diminish the steep learning curve and ensure that more resident coordinators could hit the ground running.

41. Ahead of the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the Alliance called on the entities of the United Nations development system and on resident coordinators, in collaboration with the small island developing States units of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS), to support small island developing States in every way possible in gathering information on the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. That would help to ensure the focused and targeted generation of a new blueprint extending to 2030 and beyond.

42. It was no longer acceptable for the United Nations development system to complain about a lack of data on small island developing States without taking concrete actions to address systemic issues. The Alliance hoped that scattered data could be gathered into a central place or hub for small island developing States.

43. As a part of the global South, Alliance members believed that South-South cooperation remained critical in providing the resources and peer-to-peer partnerships required to help in the facilitation of the 2030 Agenda. It had also been a critical asset during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, , it could not be a replacement or a substitute for North-South partnerships or ODA.

44. It was disheartening that despite their evident vulnerabilities, small island developing States were the country group least prioritized by contributing countries when making funding decisions. However, the Alliance appreciated the ongoing work on the development of a multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States, and the contributions of the resident coordinators and other partners to make it a reality. The entities of the United Nations development system, the international financial institutions, development banks

and donors should ensure the prompt implementation of that index, upon its adoption.

45. **Mr. Chindawongse** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that half the population of ASEAN lived in urban areas, and an additional 70 million people were expected to live in ASEAN cities by 2025. While urbanization had been a crucial driver of economic growth in ASEAN, many cities in the region were among the most vulnerable in the world to natural disasters as a result of climate change.

46. Recognizing that its actions at the local level would have a profound global impact, ASEAN had implemented a number of initiatives and strategies. The ASEAN Smart Cities Network, a collaborative platform comprising 26 cities, was aimed at catalysing cooperation through technological and innovative solutions. It sought to harness the benefits of digital transformation while addressing its risks and challenges. As part of its effort to transition to a low-carbon economy, ASEAN had adopted a framework for a circular economy which set out a structured pathway towards the long-term goals of resource efficiency, economic resilience and sustainable growth. In that connection, ASEAN member States reaffirmed their commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. In 2021, ASEAN had adopted the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on the Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters (ASEAN SHIELD). ASEAN looked forward to working with the United Nations, UN-Habitat and all its partners to build a future of smart, sustainable and resilient cities.

47. With respect to operational activities for development, ASEAN welcomed the comprehensive and coherent response and whole-of-system approach of the United Nations development system. It encouraged partners to secure adequate, predictable and sustainable funding of the resident coordinator system in order to ensure that its response was coherent, effective, efficient and accountable, in line with national needs and priorities.

48. ASEAN welcomed the positive progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations (2021–2025). Together with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), ASEAN had identified and enhanced the common objectives laid down in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda through a dedicated complementarities initiative.

ASEAN reaffirmed its commitment to intensifying cooperation in the implementation of the complementarities road map for the period 2020–2025 and effectively realizing the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. To that end, the bio-circular green economy and other sustainability models had been explored as a means of complementing regional efforts to advance the Goals and propel ASEAN community-building towards a more sustainable and resilient future. The Association also reiterated its continued support for the work of the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue in enhancing sustainable development cooperation.

49. ASEAN welcomed the organization of the Global South-South Development Expo, co-hosted by Thailand, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and ESCAP, held in Bangkok in September 2022. In that context, ASEAN would continue to promote the exchange of best practices as well as technical cooperation through South-South and triangular cooperation.

50. **Ms. Arif** (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), said that it would be important to hear from stakeholders at the country level on what did and did not work. Transparency was crucial to maintain confidence in the United Nations system and its reform. In that connection, the case of the United Nations Office for Project Services had highlighted the significance of transparency, and of ensuring that all internal system-wide guidance documents and relevant reports were both easily accessible and understandable and publicly available.

51. Whole-of-system approaches in conflict-affected countries should be followed by a strengthened nexus approach. The Nordic countries wished to know how reform strengthened the linkages between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding work at the country level. They attached particular importance to the resident coordinator system and believed that resident coordinators would be genuinely empowered to lead that work only with the full implementation of the management and accountability framework.

52. The draft resident coordinator system results framework would be important for monitoring the extent to which the system was delivering on expectations. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework must reflect the comparative advantage of the United Nations in each country. The common country analysis, which examined the root causes of inequality, poverty and vulnerability, was a crucial entry point. The current funding pattern

continued to be an obstacle to reform, and the insufficient funding of the new resident coordinator system remained a concern.

53. Gender equality and the empowerment of women had a multiplier effect for achieving sustained and inclusive growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The Nordic countries expected full implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

54. At the cultural level, the strong top-down leadership and political will that had driven implementation included cultural and behavioural changes that could make reform self-sustaining. Key challenges to reform included embedding ownership and buy-in across both United Nations entities and Member States where possible inconsistencies between Headquarters and the field level led to behaviour misaligned with global commitments.

55. **Ms. Chimbiri Molande** (Malawi), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that, in many ways, the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, adopted in March 2022, represented the beginning of a new era for the least developed countries. To implement it at a time when the global community was attempting to address unprecedented challenges and turn them into opportunities, it would have to be integrated into the frameworks, strategies, country programmes and funding frameworks of the United Nations development system in a “whole-of-United-Nations approach”.

56. Increased expenditure in the least developed countries since 2020 was entirely due to increased spending on humanitarian assistance, with only 30 per cent of expenditures going towards development activities. That was particularly worrying for the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda. However, if the United Nations system did not invest in building more resilient, peaceful, just and inclusive societies and advancing the socioeconomic transformation of the least developed countries as laid out in the Doha Programme of Action, humanitarian assistance requirements would continue to climb, and the least developed countries would not achieve their long-term visions of sustainable development. The Group therefore called on agencies to ensure that at least 50 per cent of their total expenditure went to the least developed countries.

57. To reach the targets set in the Doha Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, a new approach to funding was clearly needed. The Group noted with concern that progress remained modest on

funding compact commitments, and that a fundamental shift in how the system was funded was yet to take place.

58. The least developed countries needed well-coordinated support that responded to their specific needs. In that connection, the Group appreciated the preparation of a road map for the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action by UN-OHRLS.

59. It was a matter of great concern that the least developed country category was still not recognized in strategic planning and resource allocation by a number of United Nations entities and international organizations, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The Group called for universal recognition of the least developed countries and for earmarking a specific percentage of resources for them.

60. The Group relied on the reinvigorated resident coordinator system and the new generation of United Nations country teams to leverage stronger support for the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action at the country level, not only by mainstreaming the Programme of Action in the common country analysis and cooperation frameworks and aligning priorities, but also by matching the needs of the least developed countries through more focused and tailored support and accelerating transition at the scale needed. In that regard, the Group hoped to see more joint funding initiatives at the country level that would help the least developed countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals within the remaining time frame. Such joint initiatives should also cover implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Doha Programme of Action.

61. Effective and broad partnerships, as well as new ones, were needed to implement the priority areas of the Doha Programme of Action. South-South and triangular cooperation would also be key in mobilizing more resources and in furthering trade, investment and economic and technological cooperation in the decade of action. In conclusion, the Group looked forward to participation by Member States and the relevant organizations of the United Nations development system in the second part of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Doha from 5 to 9 March 2023.

62. **Mr. Muhith** (Bangladesh) said that the centrality of the right to adequate housing, including access to land, public spaces and public services, had become even more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Global solidarity, enhanced multi-stakeholder partnerships, better planning and scaled-up investments

were needed to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, which had thus far been very slow.

63. Country ownership and local initiatives were crucial to building sustainable, affordable, climate-resilient and inclusive cities. Under Ashrayan (“safe shelter or housing”), the signature project of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, his Government had provided 8.8 million houses to homeless people across the country; slums were being upgraded; a model of inclusive development that emphasized self-reliance, dignity and economic and social empowerment was being followed; and husbands and wives were guaranteed an equal share in property and home ownership. Bangladesh was also elaborating a comprehensive urban development plan with a specific focus on climate change strategies and policies.

64. As ODA covered only 3 per cent of the nearly \$5.4 trillion needed to finance the global urban infrastructure gap, alternative funding sources must be found. To implement and monitor the New Urban Agenda, action should be taken on the long-term and predictable financing mechanisms recommended by the 2018 report of the Secretary General on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. It was essential to scale up development assistance and capacity-building in developing countries so that they could implement the recommendations of the New Urban Agenda and achieve Sustainable Development Goal 11 on sustainable cities.

65. Effective South-South and triangular cooperation could facilitate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda through the exchange of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned, as well as technology transfer. Cooperation could be developed around such critical issues as urban pollution; sustainability and capacity-building in urban planning, infrastructure development and waste management; and revenue generation by local governments.

66. For quite some time, Bangladesh had floated a proposal to create a platform for foreign ministers, finance ministers and development ministers from the global South within the South-South cooperation framework. Those ministers would meet periodically to discuss shared development pathways and shape cooperation to meet their common aspirations. Bangladesh was looking forward to working with partners to make the platform a reality.

67. **Mr. Mandla** (South Africa) said that the COVID-19 pandemic had added a significant hurdle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by their 2030 deadline, in particular, Goal 11. The Integrated Urban Development Framework of South Africa took an

all-of-society approach to transforming and restructuring urban spaces, guided by the vision of creating liveable, safe, resource-efficient cities and towns that were socially integrated, economically inclusive and globally competitive, and where residents actively participated in urban life.

68. The New Urban Agenda contained 53 entry points for addressing urban poverty in informal settlements. Prioritizing the upgrading of informal settlements in a participatory, inclusive and holistic manner could have a profoundly positive effect on social cohesion, resilience and safety, especially if there were targeted interventions to protect vulnerable women, youth, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

69. While national Governments had a leading role to play in sustainable urban development, the role of subnational and local governments, as well as civil society and other relevant stakeholders, was equally important. Collaborative action should cut across all stakeholder groups and all levels of government. Opportunities for international cooperation, including subnational and city-to-city cooperation, should be expanded with a view to developing capacities and fostering exchanges of urban and rural solutions.

70. In addition to overarching national policies aimed at addressing environmental sustainability in South Africa, cities were making strides towards a just urban transition. Key policy instruments related to climate change mitigation, the protection of critical biodiversity, waste management and best use of resources, including natural resources, public transport, and city densification, were being developed.

71. **Mr. Segura Aragón** (El Salvador) said that El Salvador was making every effort to achieve sustainable urban development and ensure that its cities were inclusive, safe and resilient. To that end, it was promoting the right to adequate housing, decent basic services, legal ownership of property, and both national and local development projects to ensure social well-being, economic growth and environmental sustainability, particularly in the face of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and other current crises.

72. Located in the Dry Corridor, El Salvador was vulnerable to weather phenomena that had been exacerbated by climate change. It was currently facing the consequences of Tropical Storm Julia. High-risk areas lacking in resistant infrastructure were being particularly hard hit. Recognizing the importance of integral planning to promote urban resilience and climate change adaptation, El Salvador looked forward to the launch of the “Sustainable Urban Resilience for the next Generation” Initiative at the twenty-seventh

session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

73. Under its resettlement programme, the Government of El Salvador provided easy access to affordable housing loans and inclusive specialized programmes for women and youth. In three short years, it had assisted 34,000 families and invested over \$400 million in housing construction or improvement, loans, resettlement and title deeds. Among its other projects were the restoration of the San Salvador historic centre, inclusive reform of education, the opening of social welfare and recreational centres for low-income families, and the construction of a new Pacific airport and railway.

74. El Salvador therefore reiterated its call to strengthen the role of UN-Habitat and scale up cooperation with development banks and the private sector to support investments in sustainable urbanization. Equally important were greater technical, financial and technological support and capacity-building through urban policies that prioritized the three dimensions of sustainable development as well as proper and coordinated governance at all levels.

75. El Salvador hoped that a coherent, coordinated, integrated and collaborative response to development challenges by resident coordinators and country teams would avoid the duplication of efforts and have a greater impact at the national level. His delegation also welcomed the consolidation of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022–2026, the implementation of humanitarian and socioeconomic response plans, the dynamization and mobilization of resources and the presentation of consolidated periodic reports.

76. El Salvador recognized the importance of South-South cooperation, which should not be a replacement for other commitments to development cooperation and finance flows. Through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its Agency for International Cooperation, El Salvador was strategically positioned to play a dual role as both a provider and a recipient of South-South and triangular cooperation. It viewed South-South cooperation as a complement to national initiatives.

77. **Mr. Pisarevich** (Belarus) said that his delegation was concerned that the international community would fall far short of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and targets by 2030 and emphasized the need for the United Nations development system as a whole to intensify its efforts. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system was extremely important in that regard. The review was a concrete benchmark for

the United Nations development system and it also laid the groundwork for important and necessary changes over the medium to long term. Financing the 2030 Agenda should however continue to be a high priority in the review process.

78. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's reform efforts and noted that the resident coordinator system that had been in operation for the past four years had proven its effectiveness and relevance. The system helped to provide an integrated approach to the work of the United Nations country teams on the ground while preserving the comparative advantages of individual agencies. The activities of resident coordinators and country teams should remain fully focused on assisting Member States in implementing their national development priorities and plans, with Governments acting as key partners. It was also important to uphold the principles of voluntary funding for the resident coordinator system by Member States, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [72/279](#) and [76/4](#).

79. His delegation noted with satisfaction the quantitative contributions of United Nations organizations and agencies over the past decade in support of development processes. However, on the qualitative side, the trend was worrying. The growth in funding for operational activities had been primarily in the form of non-core resources, while the share of core resources in total operational activities had not increased. That trend undoubtedly hampered the ability of operational activities to support Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda, as non-core resources were neither a predictable nor a reliable source of support for sustainable development. Moreover, non-core resources were often politicized. In that regard, it was unacceptable to discriminate against Belarus and to block the Organization's assistance to it for the achievement of the Goals.

80. While it was natural that most of the resources from the operational bodies of the United Nations system were received by low-income countries, there was also a need to support the group of middle-income countries, which had their own specific development problems and accounted for about two thirds of all United Nations Member States. A strategic document on United Nations cooperation with middle-income countries was long overdue within the United Nations system. That message had been clearly articulated at numerous international conferences and other high-level events on the topic of middle-income countries. Stability and progress in the development of middle-income countries would also have a positive impact on development processes in low-income countries, and it

was important to establish cooperation between those two groups of countries.

81. **Mr. Negash** (Ethiopia) said that the disparity in access to vaccines by developing countries, and particularly the least developed countries, during the COVID-19 pandemic had underscored the relevance of effective South-South and triangular cooperation. Enhanced integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into the strategic policies and programmes of United Nations entities was essential. The entire United Nations development system should be more focused on sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on eradicating poverty and building long-term development resilience. Robust support for national institutions that advanced South-South and triangular cooperation in developing countries should be part of the strategic framework of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, and relevant United Nations entities should boost the productive capacities of developing countries, especially the least developed countries, in such strategic sectors as agriculture, industry and energy. Ethiopia also encouraged United Nations entities to form collaborative partnerships in response to pandemics, climate change and other development challenges.

82. The repositioning of the United Nations development system should be guided by the principles of national ownership and leadership, country-contextual responses rather than a "one size fits all" approach, and country-level delivery. Sustainable and predictable funding would be vital to ensure a smooth transition and avoid any risk of further fragmentation of the system at the country level. A well-resourced and staffed United Nations and a country team that could support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level were of paramount importance.

83. As host to one of the largest United Nations country teams in the world and one of the largest United Nations regional presences, including the Economic Commission for Africa, Ethiopia believed it was crucial for the Organization to take a streamlined and coordinated approach that would reduce duplication and provide stronger and more coherent support for building capacities at the regional level.

84. Development partners should mobilize predictable and sufficient resources and address the imbalance between core and non-core resources. For developing countries, South-South cooperation was crucial to implementing the 2030 Agenda, based on the principles of solidarity and complementarity to North-South cooperation.

85. **Ms. Wang Hongbo** (China) said that in its dedication to achieving housing for all, China had built the world's largest housing supply and support system, continued to improve its urban living environment and had achieved 45 per cent greenery coverage. On a global level, there was a great need for innovative and coordinated green open development concepts, better institutional mechanisms for urban planning and a people-centred approach. Her country looked forward to working with all parties and contributing more Chinese wisdom and solutions towards realizing the vision of the New Urban Agenda.

86. China actively made voluntary contributions to the United Nations development system and worked with development agencies on local cooperation projects to help developing countries recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and address other challenges. It believed that the United Nations development system should respect the ownership and leadership of developing countries and provide support for their most urgent needs and priorities, with a focus on poverty eradication, access to food, energy, capacity-building and digital connectivity. The system should fully leverage the role of resident coordinators; strengthen coordination and communication with host Governments, including through the provision of timely reports; and promote coordination with country teams.

87. China called for the full implementation of the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the presentation of the Secretary-General's reports at the annual operational activities for development segment of the Economic and Social Council. Member States should be briefed on progress in all areas. To offset the decline in funding resources and the low proportion of core funding, traditional donors should fulfil their ODA commitments and development agencies should enhance their financing capabilities.

88. China firmly supported the call for greater solidarity with South-South cooperation, an important means of leveraging the advantages of developing countries and achieving common development. It urged Member States to uphold multilateralism, support the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation as a focal point, promote the integration of South-South cooperation into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and form synergies to support financial and technical capacity-building in developing countries.

89. China made every effort to help other developing countries achieve common development. It had carried out more than 130 projects in over 50 developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In

September 2021, China had proposed global development initiatives aimed at accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and in June 2022, President Xi had announced that an additional 1 billion dollars would be contributed to the Global Development and South-South Co-operation Fund he had launched.

90. **Ms. Kimani** (Kenya) said that implementation of the New Urban Agenda could be realized only with enhanced resources, government and institutional data collection, grass roots-led planning in a bottom-up approach and the continuous exchange of information. Kenya called for timely reports on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and further concerted action to increase the accessibility of quality, affordable and sustainable housing at a time when the number of slums and evictions was rising.

91. Recognizing the importance of localized efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Kenya continued to strengthen the capacities of subnational governments through local sustainable development coordination frameworks that provided training in sustainable development planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting. Gratifying as it was that local and regional governments from 34 countries had produced 121 voluntary local reviews since 2017, more remained to be done. Knowledge-sharing, cooperation and capacity support among cities and municipalities would serve to fast-track implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

92. While cities accounted for nearly 70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, all countries must nonetheless work together for climate mitigation and adaptation, in line with common but differentiated responsibilities. UN-Habitat should continue to collaborate with Member States and all relevant stakeholders in accelerating its climate change proposals across all programmes, particularly construction, transport, energy and water, in order to build the resilience of urban infrastructure and support the most vulnerable communities.

93. Lastly, UN-Habitat could not credibly continue to execute its mandate with insufficient resources and inadequate staffing. Adequate, predictable and sufficient financing must be mobilized urgently.

94. **Ms. Le Thoa Thi Minh** (Viet Nam) said that it was important to rectify the imbalance between core and non-core resources for development and enhance partnerships to realize the Sustainable Development Goals, including with international financial institutions, multilateral development banks and the private sector. Her delegation called on donor partners to increase core funding of operational activities to

ensure that they remained neutral, voluntary, universal and multilateral.

95. Viet Nam supported reform of the development system, bearing in mind that no one size fit all and strong government ownership was critical. United Nations development activities should be a complement to national efforts in accordance with the varied needs, priorities and strategies of Member States. Her delegation also agreed that United Nations country teams needed to strengthen specific skills, expertise and configuration to support countries' transitions in energy, food systems, digital transformation and such strategic areas as poverty eradication, social protection, quality education, universal health coverage and climate action. Through greater collaboration at the regional level, the full range of regional expertise could be coordinated with resident coordinators and country teams.

96. As one of the original eight countries in the pilot "Delivering as one" initiative, Viet Nam had enhanced the productivity of its development partnership with the United Nations and remained committed to strengthening the United Nations development system.

97. **Ms. Yankittikul** (Thailand) said that cities had a key role to play in responding to emergencies and advancing sustainable development at the local level. Under the Baan Mankong, or Stable Housing project, local communities in Thailand were actively engaged in decision-making, and approximately 250,000 low-income households had been provided with housing in over 3,000 communities across the country.

98. Thailand welcomed the progress made on the repositioning of the United Nations development system and the reinvigorated resident coordinator system. It stressed the need to move forward on the mandates set out in the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review and reiterated its call to the entities of the United Nations development system to assist countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

99. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022–2026 served as a guide for cooperation between her Government and the United Nations country team in delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals while aligning with the country's sufficiency economy philosophy and its other development strategies and national efforts to achieve sustainable economic growth through the bio-circular – green economy model. To ensure a participatory and inclusive process, Thailand had developed its United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework through multi-stakeholder consultations with the private sector, parliament, civil society and academia, emphasizing the use of innovative

approaches, digital tools, polling and social media platforms for wider outreach.

100. Thailand continued to support human resource development through its Annual International Training Course and its "Our Friends from Thailand" volunteer programme, which had been selected by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for inclusion in the showcase on Sustainable Development Goals good practices. The volunteer programme not only provided technical assistance but also fostered people-to-people connections that were key to partnerships for development.

101. Thailand encouraged all countries to share locally driven and home-grown development approaches and pathways to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The recent Global South-South Development Expo, co-hosted by Thailand, ESCAP and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, had served as a global platform for developing countries to exchange ideas, share adaptable solutions and explore new partnerships for development cooperation.

102. **Ms. Alostad** (Kuwait) said that 44 years after the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, based on the 1977 Kuwait Declaration on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, South-South cooperation was no longer limited to technical cooperation but also included many other areas of partnership. Innovation was vital to enable the countries of the South to keep pace with changes and address gaps that undermined their local capacities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. In the context of operational activities for development, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development had financed projects in more than 100 countries in various sectors, including energy, transport, communication, water, sanitation, agriculture, irrigation, health and education. The Fund, established in 1961, had been the first development institution in the Middle East to play an active role in international development efforts.

103. In a world facing numerous crises – regional conflicts, climate change, pandemic turmoil, soaring inflation, the spectre of increasing hunger – Kuwait urged all stakeholders to engage in effective partnerships to support development cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, and counted on the role played by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation as an expression of solidarity in the commitment to leave no one behind.

104. **Mr. Al-khalidi** (Iraq) said that the importance attached by his country to the New Urban Agenda was

reflected in the work of the cities and human settlements team created by the National Committee for Sustainable Development. That team, along with the Committee for Urban Development, addressed obstacles to achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; Goal 8, target 9, on devising and implementing policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products; and Goal 9, target 1, on developing sustainable infrastructure.

105. Iraq had established partnerships with UN-Habitat to develop strategies for slums and housing for displaced persons that included, inter alia, urban renewal in Mosul, economic development in the Maysan marshes and emergency shelter. UN-Habitat had provided his Government with invaluable assistance in updating its national housing policy, including by helping it to use satellite technology to identify the boundaries of informal neighbourhoods. He called for adequate funding for UN-Habitat and drew particular attention to the importance of UN-Habitat Governing Council resolution 26/2 on enhancing the role of UN-Habitat in urban crisis response. Iraq had also established its own sovereign reconstruction fund to rehabilitate areas that had sustained damage in its war against terrorist groups, and the Central Bank of Iraq offered concessional loans to promote local economic development and job creation.

106. **Mr. Alghofaili** (Saudi Arabia) said that his Government's Saudi Vision 2030 plan dovetailed completely with the 2030 Agenda, including Sustainable Development Goal 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The Kingdom's efforts to address climate change included the Saudi Green Initiative and the Middle East Green Initiative, which would plant tens of billions of trees and make significant contributions to reducing regional carbon emissions.

107. Saudi Arabia had launched four ambitious new initiatives inspired by the New Urban Agenda. The Green Riyadh project aimed to vastly expand green spaces in urban areas and plant millions of trees along city streets. The Sports Boulevard project would provide Riyadh with over 100 km of walking, cycling and horse-riding trails. The Central Development Project in Jeddah was conducting far-reaching renovations designed to make that port city a hub along the Red Sea. The Neom smart city project was creating an unprecedented new model for carbon-neutral urban living. Saudi Arabia would continue to support all efforts to promote sustainable environments for human habitation.

108. **Mr. Komarkov** (Russian Federation) said that the needs of developing countries for assistance in the face of increasingly difficult macroeconomic conditions continued to grow. In that context, the role of the United Nations development system as a source of grant funding was particularly important. His delegation was concerned about the 2.5-fold increase in humanitarian spending by United Nations agencies over the past decade. In 2021 such spending had accounted for 42 per cent of all United Nations system spending, against a backdrop of stagnant spending on development efforts. Continuing to grapple with the consequences rather than the causes of development challenges would not bring the world any closer to the timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To overcome that trend, his delegation called on developed countries to fulfil their commitments to increase ODA to 0.7 per cent of their gross national income. Most traditional donors had never achieved this target.

109. For its part, the Russian Federation had increased its assistance to developing countries by almost 25 per cent in 2021. The volume of its ODA in 2021 amounted to \$1.2 billion and much of it had been delivered to recipients through United Nations organizations. In that context, his delegation noted with regret that the illegal restrictive measures in the banking sector imposed on his country had noticeably complicated Russian cooperation with the United Nations development system. However, it was countries in need that would suffer the most from the reduction of such cooperation.

110. In view of the obvious need to enhance the efficiency of United Nations operational activities, his delegation would closely follow the progress of reform of the United Nations development system and would continue to insist that the updated United Nations resident coordinator system be compact, flexible and cost-effective. The quality of resident coordinator reporting should also be improved to demonstrate the added value of the resident coordinators' work. It was hoped that the set of indicators currently being developed for evaluating resident coordinators would meet that request.

111. The Russian Federation endorsed the key principles of South-South cooperation, including respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs, taking into account country-specific characteristics and refraining from imposing foreign development models. It highly appreciated the role of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation in harnessing the potential of such international cooperation, especially against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. For its part, his country participated in triangular cooperation projects, making

financial and expert contributions to the capacity-building of its partners, including within the Commonwealth of Independent States region and in Africa. It implemented such programmes jointly with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Food Programme and other United Nations agencies. Regional ties in such formats as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union and the grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) also contributed to building mutually beneficial and equal partnerships between the countries of the South and their partners to meet global challenges.

112. Lastly, his delegation emphasized the undeniable importance of the development of human settlements to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Quality urban infrastructure must continue to be built to ensure universal access to basic services, including electricity, water and sanitation. The New Urban Agenda was a key document on urban issues and work on its implementation must be stepped up. In that regard, his delegation noted the expertise of UN-Habitat and the central coordinating role of UN-Habitat in the area of sustainable urbanization.

113. **Mr. Thaphanya** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that, over the years, the partnership between his Government and United Nations country team had been strengthened through the implementation of different partnership frameworks. The repositioning of the United Nations development system should continue to focus on supporting national priorities and prioritize the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. An appropriate monitoring and reporting mechanism should be put in place to track progress, challenges and development impact, with an emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goals and targets that were off-track.

114. His delegation welcomed continued efforts to reinvigorate the resident coordinator system and enhance its leadership role, and to improve the coordination mechanism among United Nations agencies to ensure they could deliver as one. In that context, it also supported strengthening the capacity of resident coordinator offices to respond to countries' specific challenges.

115. As both a least developed country and a landlocked developing country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic remained strongly committed to the realization of the Doha Programme of Action and the Vienna Programme of Action as well as the 2030 Agenda. In that connection, his Government had been

working closely with the United Nations country team, development partners and all stakeholders to streamline the goals and targets set in those programmes of action into its National Social-Economic Development Plans and National Development Strategy for 2025. Its ultimate goal was to ensure a smooth transition towards sustainable graduation from least developed country status.

116. The Lao People's Democratic Republic urged development partners to provide the United Nations development system with adequate resources and predictable and sustainable funding to ensure effective delivery and support, especially to countries in special situations. The development system and other specialized agencies should mobilize resources to bridge the development gap, in accordance with national needs and priorities, and help strengthen the capacity of relevant national mechanisms to sustainably implement poverty eradication programmes; mitigate the impact of ongoing food insecurity, climate change and the energy crisis; and build resilience to future shocks.

117. **Ms. Torres Seara** (Cuba) said that poverty eradication, still the greatest challenge the world was facing, should remain a top priority and an underlying objective of the operational activities of the United Nations development system. With a view to helping developing countries attain the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, synergies among the components of the United Nations development system should continue to be strengthened while still respecting the mandates of each entity.

118. National ownership of operational activities on the ground should continue to be the guiding principle of the development system, taking into account diverse and specific national circumstances as well as the priorities of developing countries, including countries in special situation and facing specific challenges. The repositioning of the United Nations development system should be implemented in accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) and adhere strictly to the mandates set out in resolution [75/233](#). The development system must urgently address deficit-resource imbalances, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities between developing countries and donors. Non-core contributions must be more flexible and tailored to the national priorities and plans of developing countries.

119. Beyond the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States of America against Cuba for over 60 years continued to be the chief obstacle to development and

achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in her country. According to the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Cuba, during the pandemic, it had been necessary to obtain certain crucial products and services, many of them humanitarian in nature, including medicines, medical and personal protective equipment, food, laboratory equipment and agricultural tools, through third countries and secondary suppliers at much higher prices. Operational activities should be guided by multilateralism and solidarity, not exclusion.

120. **Ms. Adnan** (Malaysia) said that with 25.7 million people living in urban areas, Malaysia prioritized sustainable urbanization and was incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into its twelfth national development plan and its national urbanization policy. With the aim of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, it was advancing green growth towards a low-carbon nation. Malaysia continued to collaborate closely with the United Nations country team to advance its national development agenda and viewed the United Nations development system as an invaluable partner that would deliver transparent and results-based progress, tailored to its national priorities and capabilities.

121. The COVID-19 pandemic had made it more urgent than ever to review the features of cities and prepare for future pandemics and shocks. Her delegation would continue to support UN-Habitat in its work to explore the role of data, science, technology and innovation with a view to building resilient cities. The international community must summon the political will to address the housing crisis in the developing world, where more than 1 billion people still lived in slums, and even in the developed world.

122. Malaysia would continue to support global partnerships in addressing the special needs of the least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries and attached great importance to the role of South-South cooperation in promoting sustainable socioeconomic growth and development. It would continue to provide capacity-building and technical assistance programmes under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme, from which a total of 44 recipient countries had thus far benefited. The programmes covered such key areas as agriculture, economy, finance and trade, industrial technical training and social development.

123. **Mr. Flores** (Honduras) said that Honduras was undergoing a crisis exacerbated by natural disasters that were devastating a major portion of its territory and, under 12 years of dictatorship, its poverty level had reached 74 per cent. The new Government of the Republic, under the leadership of Iris Xiomara Castro

Sarmiento, was taking a three-part approach to establishing decent living conditions for its people in accordance with the New Urban Agenda. First, financing for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda was being decentralized to ensure that it was carried out directly by local governments. Second, basic service projects on sewerage, sanitation, energy, drinking water and better educational, sanitary and housing infrastructure were being promoted in the poorest communities, guaranteeing sustainable and resilient local development. Third, transparency and citizen participation in decision-making were ensured by national ownership and accountability. The result of those three measures had been a 1.4 million decrease in the national housing deficit.

124. Honduras attached great importance to improving the lives of communities through the development of decent housing under the New Urban Agenda. In empowering local communities to launch sustainable projects in such areas as education, health, social housing and investment in infrastructure and social development, his Government was respecting the views of the beneficiaries on the ground.

125. **Mr. Mwasota** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his country had been implementing the New Urban Agenda since its adoption in 2016 through a number of projects and programmes designed to ensure that, by 2030, cities and human settlements would be inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Between 2016 and 2020, it had issued \$652,000 in housing loans to government employees, and between 2015 and 2022, the number of banks providing housing loans had increased tenfold. Loan repayment periods had been extended and interest rates on housing loans had been reduced by as much as 23 per cent. His Government had recently conducted its first national building census to assess the current housing situation and determine future areas of concentration.

126. The United Republic of Tanzania had decided to utilize available renewable sources for a sustainable energy supply with the aim of reaching a country-installed capacity of 10,000 megawatts by 2025. The Government continued to invest in power generation using hydro, natural gas, coal and renewable energies and was extending its grid network to reach isolated areas. It was also engaged in power interconnection projects to enable power trading with neighbouring countries in order to improve power security in the region. In conclusion, his delegation called on the international community to continue supporting developing countries through concessional and grant finance for sustainable cities and communities.

127. **Ms. Hamdouni** (Morocco) said that timely implementation of the New Urban Agenda was necessary not only for sustainable urban development and innovations for small and intermediate cities, but also for achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the Paris Agreement. Morocco continued to develop urban management through inclusive and sustainable urbanization, as well as integrated and sustainable human settlements that were open, accessible and adaptable to natural hazards. Morocco was among the eight countries on the African continent to have published its national report on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, which it had done in March 2022.

128. Morocco welcomed the improved leadership and impartiality of resident coordinators under the reinvigorated system and consultation of host Governments by the new country teams. Continuation of that high-quality work would require adequate, sustainable and predictable financing.

129. South-South cooperation continued to be one of the main pillars of her country's foreign policy, based on the principles of solidarity and national ownership. Its projects and initiatives on South-South and triangular cooperation in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Pacific ranged from academic and technical cooperation and capacity-building to artistic and cultural cooperation and provided investments in such key sectors as agriculture, energy and banking services.

130. Her delegation welcomed the substantive nature of the Secretary-General's report on South-South and triangular cooperation and the action-oriented recommendations it contained. It supported the strengthening of national efforts to measure both financial and in-kind South-South cooperation flows under Sustainable Development Goal indicator 17.3.1 adopted at the fifty-third session of the Statistical Commission. Greater impetus should be given to addressing development challenges at regular ministerial-level dialogues on South-South and triangular cooperation. Morocco joined the call to scale up contributions to the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation and other relevant financing mechanisms to enable the United Nations development system to advance South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives.

131. Lastly, for the second time, the delegations of Morocco and Portugal would be co-facilitating discussions on a South-South draft resolution. They looked forward to constructive engagement by all Second Committee members.

132. **Ms. Hapsari** (Indonesia) said that during its presidency of the Group of 20, Indonesia had prioritized strong and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and other global crises, bearing in mind the particular needs of developing and least developed countries. The principles of inclusiveness, transparency and flexibility had always been the foundation of her country's South-South cooperation policies. Gaps between the global North and South, among the global South and within countries must be addressed, especially in the context of development, food insecurity and inclusive international trade.

133. During the COVID-19 pandemic, South-South and triangular cooperation had enabled many developing countries to obtain urgently needed medication, vaccines and medical supplies from fellow South-South partners. The advancement of South-South and triangular cooperation should therefore be continued not only in the broader context of implementing the 2030 Agenda but also as a complement to North-South cooperation during the post-pandemic recovery. The digital divide, especially in developing and the least developed countries, had also been further exposed by the pandemic. In that regard as well, South-South and triangular cooperation could become the enabler of high-quality, affordable and accessible connectivity by ensuring access to, and the transfer of, technology among the global South.

134. Indonesia welcomed the continued mainstreaming of South-South cooperation into United Nations strategies and programmes, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General ([A/77/297](#), para. 25). Emphasizing that the work of resident coordinators should be aligned with the national priorities of Member States, she stressed the key role of the United Nations development system in strengthening South-South cooperation and, within that system, the essential role of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation in leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development.

135. In building resilience to future pandemics and crises, South-South cooperation could be optimized through joint research, knowledge and technology transfers. More innovative and sustainable financing should be mobilized to that end. Triangular cooperation to explore further funding and cross-sharing arrangements was also increasingly relevant. As its commitment to South-South cooperation was integral to its national and foreign policies, Indonesia had launched an endowment fund for international development.

136. **Mr. Eko** (Cameroon) said that his country had contributed to the adoption of the New Urban Agenda

and had made significant strides in implementing it along with Sustainable Development Goal 11. Through a series of guiding instruments aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, Cameroon had established a national housing policy, the national urban policy “Horizon 2035” and a national development strategy. The urban framework and living conditions, particularly in slums, had improved noticeably thanks to a proactive policy of encouraging the use of local materials and reducing construction costs, all with a significant impact on people’s livelihoods. Urban plans had been drafted for one third of Cameroonian towns.

137. A government programme to construct 10,000 social housing units and develop 50,000 plots of land was under way and a pilot project, “urban and rural linkage”, had been launched with the support of UN-Habitat. Other government initiatives were centred on technological development, innovation, urban mobility, access to green spaces and safer and more resilient transport systems. As for urban legislation and regulations, the accelerated transfer of skills and resources to local authorities had had a positive impact on inclusion, sustainability, equitable local financing and the promotion of local finance principles. Inclusive land reform policies prioritized the involvement of local authorities, women and young people.

138. Tax revenue based on the principle of declaration by the taxpayer had facilitated management of the financial and fiduciary effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic had also brought about a surge in infrastructure and services, the consolidation and improvement of the health system, the development and enhancement of traditional local pharmacopoeia and more accurate data on housing and vulnerable households, thanks to the adoption of a high-quality national framework for the production of official statistics. Tools to promote the local economy had been put in place and new loan formulas were being granted to low-income and young people. Through national hygiene and sanitation campaigns and awards, as well as best practices in localizing the Sustainable Development Goals, the Government was successfully promoting a clean and healthy environment.

139. Overall, emphasis was being placed on access to basic urban infrastructure and services, the professional integration of young people, the generation of new income sources in municipalities and capacity-building for the management of construction processes.

140. As its cities provided 60 per cent of its gross domestic product, Cameroon, like several other African countries, was confronted with the challenge of financing rapid urbanization. It was nonetheless

committed to providing adequate and affordable housing to low-income families with the constructive support of UN-Habitat, and to ensuring that its cities and urban settlements were inclusive, safe, resilient and durable. It called for multi-stakeholder coordination and partnership to that end.

141. **Mr. Anyaegbu** (Nigeria) said that statistic on inadequate housing in *World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities*, juxtaposed with a soaring population in sub-Saharan Africa, presented a daunting task for Africa in its struggle to implement the New Urban Agenda. The housing deficit must be addressed through concerted action, especially in Africa, where inadequate infrastructure, slum proliferation and challenges to safe and sustainable mobility abounded. There was an urgent need for enhanced stakeholder engagement in urban planning, and for mechanisms to achieve affordable housing for all through the use of smart technologies and other tools. Nigeria reaffirmed its commitment to the New Urban Agenda and its implementation, including the decade of action, and to Sustainable Development Goal 11. As part of its initiative to provide affordable housing for all, his Government had partnered with the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria to launch a programme in which cooperatives were a vehicle for expanding the scale of construction.

142. Nigeria underscored the importance of building, promoting and strengthening the capacity of developing countries to achieve long-term sustainable development, while recognizing different development levels and realities. The repositioning of the United Nations development system was indeed providing more integrated, efficient and better-quality support tailored to country needs and priorities on sustainable development. The system should sustain its support to developing countries, especially African countries seeking to address multidimensional and cross-border challenges, including COVID-19, climate change and food insecurity.

143. His delegation reaffirmed its unwavering support for the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, which should adhere strictly to the principles of national leadership, national ownership and non-politicization; continue to focus on development in host countries; and support the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework based on national needs and priorities.

144. **Ms. Karatepe** (Türkiye) said that to address emerging urbanization issues, Türkiye had developed a national spatial strategy plan in line with innovative, inclusive, transparent and solution-oriented principles.

Its urbanization experience as well as its national, regional and local efforts to promote sustainable urban growth were detailed in its national report on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, submitted in March 2021.

145. The second quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda acknowledged efforts by Türkiye in the areas of vocational training and employment of youth; transitioning to formal employment programmes, including for the Syrian population in Türkiye; increasing green space; and providing affordable housing to low-income groups. A new country-wide social housing campaign had been launched by President Erdogan in September. Since 2017, the country's zero waste project had been promoting sustainable urbanization and sustainable production and consumption patterns as well as the achievement of climate and biodiversity goals. Türkiye invited all delegations to support the draft resolution on zero waste that it had recently proposed to the Second Committee.

146. On 3 October, the Global Observance of World Habitat Day had taken place in the city of Balıkesir, Türkiye, under the theme "Mind the Gap: Leave No One and No Place Behind". Organized jointly with UN-Habitat, the Global Observance had drawn attention to the problem of growing inequality and challenges in cities and human settlements. Recent efforts by Türkiye to provide social housing and associated basic services had been highlighted as an exemplary national practice aimed at reducing inequalities that had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Türkiye would also continue to promote sustainable urbanization as a member of the Group of Friends of UN-Habitat, Sustainable Urbanization and the New Urban Agenda.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.