



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 February 2023

Original: English

2023 session

25 July 2022–26 July 2023

Coordination segment

Summary record of the 7th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 1 February 2023, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Nasir (Vice-President) (Indonesia)

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23-01775 (E)



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In the absence of Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria), Mr. Nasir (Indonesia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 8: Coordination segment

Opening of the segment

1. **The President**, opening the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council, said that the current segment was taking place at a watershed moment marked by unprecedented circumstances and multiple crises, which could reverse the progress made on several Sustainable Development Goals. The gravity of the situation required a revitalization of the international community, with a view to working in solidarity and taking concrete action. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be the highest priority of the international community, and the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit should serve as a pivotal moment, for a much-needed shift on to a path towards overcoming the crises and achieving the Goals. In that regard, funding for development and for the Goals should supersede funding for conflict.

2. The Council would be leveraging the work done by its subsidiary bodies and by the entities of the United Nations system and sharing proposals for transformative policies and initiatives to accelerate achievement of the Goals, for subsequent presentation to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, in preparation for the Summit.

3. **Ms. Stoeva** (Bulgaria), speaking in her capacity as President of the Council, said that 2023 would be a demanding and significant year for the Council, as it continued to be challenged by multiple interlocking global crises, and its work would pave the way for the upcoming high-level political forum and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit. The partnership forum held on the previous day had been an important stepping stone for rallying stakeholders and actors on the journey to the Summit, and had seen repeated calls for stronger political commitment and international cooperation to prevent the failure of the Sustainable Development Goals. The coordination segment had demonstrated the ability of the Council to deliver on its key roles as a central coordination mechanism for the United Nations development system, in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

4. More robust, broad-based, transparent and inclusive global partnerships were needed to engage different stakeholders and drive sustainable recovery and development, in keeping with the Goals. To that

end, civil society should be the Council's key allies; local and regional governments should be seen as front-line responders; academia and the scientific community should bolster the science-policy interface; businesses should align their business models with the Goals; and youth should be meaningfully involved in decision-making. At the same time, capital, data and development opportunity gaps needed to be closed and more capacity-building was needed to enable wider participation, including that of the least developed countries. An enabling environment was critical for providing ample civic spaces for those stakeholders and promoting a tailored approach to partnerships.

5. **Mr. Ryder** (Under-Secretary-General for Policy), speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, said that the Council had a unique and unifying role to play, which was particularly important as the international community sought to confront multiple interconnected crises in a coherent and coordinated manner, while working to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals and strengthen implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council had demonstrated how their policy recommendations and normative frameworks could help to advance the Goals, transform economies and secure a more sustainable planet for all.

6. Sustainable economic development, environmental sustainability and peace were inextricably linked, and various coordination mechanisms were being utilized to enhance cross-pillar synergies and actions within the United Nations system, in an effort to bolster country-level efforts. Furthermore, in order to respond to the various crises, the Secretary-General had created the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, which had already helped to cushion the most vulnerable from the impacts of the war in Ukraine. To scale up recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, several initiatives were in full implementation mode, including the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for a Just Transition, the Transforming Education Summit and the United Nations Youth Office, and the Secretary-General had called for early warning systems to protect people and livelihoods from hazards, especially those resulting from climate change.

7. The Sustainable Development Goals Summit would be held at the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, and would be a key moment for reigniting hope. To that end, the Secretary-General encouraged world leaders to attend the Summit prepared to share their visions, ideas and commitment for realizing the Goals, and had been advocating for a stimulus plan to help Governments invest in systems that supported development and

resilience. Other high-level events in 2023 would offer opportunities to harness interlinkages among the Goals, optimize approaches and reinforce cooperation at all levels, in order to accelerate key transitions. Those events, like the Summit, would open pathways to the Summit of the Future scheduled to take place in 2024, and were complementary to the proposals contained in Our Common Agenda. A series of policy briefs would be published on some of the major issues proposed by the Secretary-General, ahead of the Summit of the Future, and the discussions of the Council would provide inspiration and ideas for those policy briefs.

Panel discussion: “Addressing the crises, building resilience and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through risk-informed policies”

8. **The President** said that the discussion would explore how the subsidiary bodies of the Council and the entities of the United Nations system, including specialized agencies, were addressing the current crises and promoting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through the development of resilience and risk-informed policies. The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and the Statistical Commission had recently developed the Sustainable Development Goals geospatial road map, which had been adopted by the Commission. Further information was needed on how the road map and the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework could support countries in their achievement of the Goals. In the same vein, examples of how the Framework was being implemented and how it could be used to accelerate the achievement of the Goals would be welcome.

9. **Ms. Merodio Gómez** (Vice-President of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico and Co-Chair of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management), panellist, said that the global geospatial community had been ready to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and geospatial information had therefore been extensively used to inform decision-making during that time. The understanding of geographic location had been crucial in the fight against and recovery from COVID-19, and would be essential for facing future challenges.

10. Council resolution [2022/24](#), on enhancing global geospatial information management systems, reiterated the importance of increasing the effectiveness of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, particularly for its operations focused on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, in order to ensure

its continued benefits to Member States. The Framework was a multidimensional tool for strengthening geospatial information across national institutions and agencies, and was helping countries improve their informed decision-making processes to face a variety of development challenges sharing a key element, namely location. It was being implemented in several developed and developing countries, and would enable the digital transformation needed to implement national development priorities and achieve the Goals. In that regard, the Committee of Experts was working with the subsidiary bodies of the Council to promote coordination and coherence in the use of geospatial information.

11. The Sustainable Development Goals geospatial road map adopted by the Statistical Commission in 2022 was a key communication tool that provided practical guidelines for the use of geospatial information, Earth observations and other geospatially integrated data sources to produce, measure and disseminate the Goals. The Committee of Experts had continued to support the Statistical Commission in promoting the road map through capacity-building workshops in Burundi, Kyrgyzstan and Rwanda, and planned to collaborate with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names to develop a compendium of institutional arrangements for the standardization of geographical names. Geospatial information was vital for getting the 2030 Agenda back on track and building resilience to future crises, whether through the modelling of climate change scenarios, the optimization of limited resources or the improvement of connectivity to health care and education facilities, and the Committee of Experts would continue to drive it forward. Member States needed to ensure that the Committee was adequately resourced, to enable it to continue supporting the mandates of the Council, by bridging the geospatial digital divides and building more sustainable and resilient futures.

12. **The President**, noting that an implementation strategy for the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for a Just Transition had been developed in 2022, and that the International Labour Conference had adopted a universal definition of the social and solidarity economy, asked how the Global Accelerator and that new definition addressed the interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals, and how they could help countries accelerate their achievement of the Goals.

13. **Mr. Hounbo** (Director General, International Labour Organization (ILO)), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the COVID-19 pandemic had claimed millions of lives and caused an unprecedented

loss of jobs and livelihoods, leading in turn to exacerbated income insecurity, particularly for the billions of people worldwide who had no access to any kind of social protection. While the financing needed to guarantee basic income security and access to essential health care had increased by at least 30 per cent, revenues were falling as a result of reduced growth and trade, and rising inflation. Those compounding challenges were jeopardizing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

14. In response to the foregoing and under the leadership of the Secretary-General, in September 2021, ILO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund and other entities had launched the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for a Just Transition, which was an ambitious initiative aimed at helping countries to create 400 million decent jobs by 2030 and extending social protection coverage to persons who were currently excluded. Efforts were being led by the United Nations Secretariat and other United Nations agencies to implement the Global Accelerator, mobilize resources and work with pilot countries to implement policies.

15. In June 2022, the International Labour Conference had adopted a resolution that defined the social solidarity economy and placed the focus on a human-centred approach to economic, environmental and social enterprises. The aim was to have the General Assembly adopt a resolution recognizing the contribution of the social and solidarity economy to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. A core group headed by Spain, Senegal, Chile and other Member States was leading efforts in that regard, and there was a need to build on that momentum, in order to advance the interlinked social, economic and environmental dimensions of the Goals, and trace a path towards creating decent jobs with a minimum level of protection, at both the business and country levels.

16. **The President** asked how the World Bank Group balanced its focus on crisis response with its focus on long-term development, what constituted the key pillars of its response to the global crises and how partnerships between the World Bank Group and the United Nations could be envisaged.

17. **Mr. Mountfield** (Vice President for Operations Policy and Country Services, World Bank Group), panellist, speaking via video link, said that multiple, overlapping and compounding crises had put hard-earned development goals at risk, or even set them back in some cases, and had led to the rapid deceleration of global growth, high inflation and elevated debt distress risk in developing countries. At the same time, structural

trends, including climate change, COVID-19 pandemic risks and rising fragility and conflict were further complicating the situation and jeopardizing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

18. Crisis response and long-term development were increasingly inseparable, and the World Bank Group was working to balance its focus on crisis response with that on long-term development through a holistic approach addressing both the short- and long-term needs of countries. That approach was anchored in its global crisis response framework, which was an emergency programme aimed at helping countries navigate multiple overlapping crises with scale, speed and impact. In the 15 months leading up to June 2023, the World Bank Group would be deploying \$170 billion in financing to support countries in addressing food insecurity, social protection, refugee flows, health preparedness and climate crises. Approximately 70 per cent of that target had already been committed and the World Bank Group was on track to deliver the remaining portion, in full.

19. The global crisis response framework consisted of four interrelated pillars: responding to food insecurity to provide urgent support and avoid long-term derailment of development prospects; protecting people and preserving jobs to help mitigate the medium- and long-term impacts of the compounding crises on people; strengthening resilience and enhancing crisis preparedness through the upgrading of food, health care and social protection systems, among others; and strengthening policies, institutions and investments to improve long-term development outcomes. In the area of climate change, advice and financing had been provided to support adaptation and mitigation across various sectors. Country climate and development reports were available for over 20 countries, and combined the best available data, models and tools, to provide policymakers with country-specific recommendations for climate action. The response to the food and nutrition crisis had been a key aspect of the interventions of the World Bank Group, and at the beginning of the war in Ukraine it had announced that a total of \$12 billion in additional financing would be committed for food and nutrition security for the period from April 2022 to June 2023.

20. While that sum had been committed in full well ahead of the deadline and further efforts would be made, much more remained to be done, and the World Bank Group was asking for the support of its shareholders as it sought to scale up those efforts. An evolution road map was being developed with options and pathways for further addressing current challenges, and it would strengthen the commitment of the Group to serve its clients, including low- and middle-income countries,

and help them achieve the Goals in a green and inclusive manner.

21. The World Bank Group had fostered very strong partnerships with United Nations agencies to provide specialized technical expertise across a range of development issues, such as health, education, social protection and agriculture, as well as reliable quality control during procurement processes. More recently, United Nations agencies had engaged in projects led by the Group in fragile countries with high-risk environments, to assist in cases where the latter had no presence on the ground, or in situations of crisis or emergency. Since 2016, United Nations agencies had implemented close to \$10 billion in World Bank recipient-executed projects, with three quarters of the financing supporting projects in fragile and conflict-affected locations. The World Bank Group was a part of the United Nations system, valued its partnerships and saw the roles of the United Nations agencies as critical for meeting common goals. Through collective efforts even more could be done to tackle the most complex and challenging issues facing the world, and have an even greater impact on the well-being of people worldwide.

22. **The President** asked how the regional commissions were working together with United Nations entities to address the crises and promote the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through the development of resilience and risk-informed practices.

23. **Ms. Alisjahbana** (Coordinator of the United Nations regional commissions and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)), panellist, said that progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda remained far off track, and had been further derailed by overlapping crises, which had amplified one another and weakened the capacity of countries to respond. Countries therefore needed to intensify their efforts to respond to the crises and better prepare to cope with future risks and crises and, to support them in those efforts, the five regional commissions had proposed innovative policy options, provided platforms for dialogue and promoted regional partnerships, including five regional collaborative platforms, to support the development of national and regional solutions.

24. To address the stress placed on the global food system, including that caused by reduced access to fertilizers, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean had collaborated with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme to launch a joint policy brief on food security. The policy brief contained concrete

proposals to reinforce the regional plan for food security, nutrition and the eradication of hunger by 2025, with the cooperation of regional partners including the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. In Africa, accelerated industrialization and economic diversification were key to addressing the crises, and the Economic Commission for Africa was working with partners such as the World Trade Organization, UNDP and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to support the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

25. The Economic Commission for Europe had launched a series of activities to minimize air pollution, improve water management, prevent industrial accidents and assess environmental impacts. As Co-Chair of an issue-based coalition on environment and climate change, it collaborated with other entities to provide extensive country-level advisory services on those issues. In the Arab region, where water stress was an important concern, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia was working with the Economic Commission for Europe, the League of Arab States, the World Bank Group and the United Nations Environment Programme to improve water governance and advance shared water resource management. In Asia and the Pacific, the intergovernmental knowledge products and technical assistance of ESCAP were focused on building resilience to future risks. In that connection, ESCAP and other United Nations entities and development partners had supported the development of comprehensive and universal social protection as the first line of defence. Furthermore, in order to accelerate decarbonization, ESCAP had supported countries in fast-tracking and sustaining their inclusive energy transitions by developing national road maps towards Sustainable Development Goal 7.

26. Building resilience against climate shocks was a key priority in all regions, and in 2022, the regional commissions and the high-level champions for climate action had organized five regional forums focused on catalysing investments in climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience, in the lead-up to the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

27. **The President** asked what some of the critical entry points were for building resilience in all dimensions of sustainable development, for a resilient, sustainable and inclusive recovery and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. He also wondered if there were any initiatives that could be built on or further examined during the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster

Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and showcased for the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, by the Council, the United Nations system or Member States.

28. **Ms. Mizutori** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction), panellist, said that disaster risk reduction had to be a central element of policies to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in order to build resilience to current and future shocks. The upcoming high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework would be a key opportunity for the international community, and the Council was encouraged to set a prevention-oriented path for resilient, sustainable and inclusive development, in keeping with the political declaration of the 2019 Sustainable Development Goals Summit.

29. There were several risk reduction initiatives that required the collective effort of the United Nations system to support Member States and other stakeholders. One such initiative involved enhanced coordination through the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience: Towards a Risk-informed and Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development and the Senior Leadership Group on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience, to help Member States implement the Sendai Framework. Various tools to integrate risk into development and humanitarian planning had been developed, including a guidance note on integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and a checklist for scaling up disaster risk reduction in humanitarian action for countries in fragile contexts. In the same vein, the Early Warnings for All initiative of the Secretary-General, which was co-led by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), sought to ensure that every person on Earth would be protected by early warning systems by 2027, since they were the most effective measures for saving lives and reducing economic losses.

30. The Making Cities Resilient initiative aimed to help local governments safeguard their development gains by building resilience to disasters through partnerships, technical assistance and guidance and, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it had produced and rolled out a scorecard for cities, to boost the resilience of the latter's public health and food systems. Similarly, the Coalition for Disaster-Resilient Infrastructure sought to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to both climate and disaster risks,

as damage to critical infrastructure and disruptions to basic services were the largest contributors to disaster losses. Nothing devastated sustainable development like disasters, which was why many more initiatives were needed to reduce the burden of disasters on the ground, at all levels.

31. **Mr. Kadiri** (Observer for Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Like-Minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, said that the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the finance, food and energy crises, had complicated efforts to achieve sustainable development. The impact of the pandemic and its repercussions were still being felt, and vaccines should be treated as a global public good, by ensuring that they were affordable, equitable and accessible to all, without any discrimination, in keeping with the Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines. The Secretary-General had called for vaccine equity and adequate coordination among United Nations agencies and relevant stakeholders in order to enhance the distribution of vaccines in middle-income countries, particularly through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, and the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator.

32. The subsidiary bodies of the Council were urged to advance policy recommendations and risk-informed solutions that were adapted to the multidimensional and specific challenges faced by middle-income countries, in order to enable the latter to overcome the middle-income trap, address the current crises, build resilience and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, the need to look beyond the gross domestic product, as part of the reform of the financial system, had been widely discussed, and concrete progress was required on that issue, both within the Council and at the General Assembly. Such progress would allow for an inclusive approach to international cooperation and inform access to concessional and non-concessional finance and technical cooperation. The Group welcomed the discussions of the fifty-third session of the Statistical Commission on that matter, and encouraged it to reflect on how international financial institutions and relevant actors could apply multidimensional indices to inform access to concessional and non-concessional finance.

33. The Group looked forward to the mapping exercise that would be conducted by the Secretary-General, which would provide a detailed overview of the support currently available to middle-income countries, including relevant indices, frameworks, strategies and tools to address the multidimensional nature of sustainable development, facilitate sustainable

development cooperation and coordinate support for middle-income countries. It also looked forward to the contributions to that exercise by the various funds, programmes, subsidiary bodies and functional commissions, including regional commissions and the Committee for Development Policy.

34. The Group welcomed the inclusion of a segment on the challenges and needs of middle-income countries in the programme of the high-level political forum, and remained willing to collaborate with the organizers to prepare such a segment. While most middle-income countries required financial support to achieve the recently approved targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, they could nonetheless support other developing countries in achieving conservation and sustainable use objectives. The Group welcomed the holding of the current coordination segment and appreciated the progress made in enhancing its format and substance.

35. **Mr. Maisonneuve** (Representative of the European Union in its capacity as observer), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine, and the potential candidate country Georgia, said that, while the world had been thrown even further off-track in its achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by different crises and challenges, all was not lost. In the energy sector, there had been a significant global acceleration in green energy: total renewable capacity growth was set to almost double worldwide in the following five years and the cost of solar power had decreased by 82 percent in Europe over the previous decade, making it the most competitive source of electricity. However, as the Russian war against Ukraine had introduced heightened uncertainty, which was reflected in rising energy prices and food insecurity, the review of Sustainable Development Goal 7 by the high-level political forum would be taking place at an opportune time. Sustainable Development Goal 6 would also be reviewed by the Council, at a time when billions of people lacked access to clean water and basic hygiene services, and it was hoped that the upcoming United Nations Water Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028 (United Nations 2023 Water Conference), would successfully address those concerns.

36. Better policies, practices and resource mobilization were needed, along with the means of addressing the substantial gap in financing, to place the Goals back on track to being achieved by 2030. To that

end, in 2021, the European Union had launched its Global Gateway initiative to invest considerable amounts in developing regions of the world, in sectors such as digital technology, energy, transport, health, education and research. The European Union would be presenting a voluntary review of its implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the high-level political forum, detailing its internal and external efforts to achieve the Goals.

37. **Mr. Liu Liquan** (China) said that, in the face of the many challenges confronting the world, it was important for the international community to deepen cooperation, have adequate coordination and take pragmatic actions in order to accelerate recovery and get global development back on track. The root causes of the food and energy crises were not related to production or demand, but rather to the supply chain. Within international organizations, such as the United Nations, all parties should strengthen markets and cooperation; build an open, stable and sustainable commodity market; and ensure a smooth supply chain and stable market prices. It was important to resolutely oppose any politicization, manipulation or weaponization of food and energy.

38. A proper environment should be created for recovery, with increased macro policy coordination, in order to curb global inflation and mitigate systemic risks. Developed countries should maintain responsible monetary policies to prevent negative spillover effects and, given the debt distress being experienced by many developing countries, the International Monetary Fund should rechannel foreign direct investment to low-income countries. International financial institutions and commercial creditors should become actively involved in debt relief. The only way to overcome the current challenges was to advocate for more inclusive and resilient global development, build global partnerships for economic recovery and take into account the concerns and difficulties of developing countries. The Sustainable Development Goals Summit and the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development would offer important opportunities that should be capitalized on to attain international consensus and draw a blueprint for the second half of the implementation period of the 2030 Agenda.

39. China had always been an active participant in global development, and in 2021 it had presented a Global Development Initiative: building on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for stronger, greener and healthier global development, which aimed to give new impetus to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Initiative had reached the stage of pragmatic cooperation, and China stood ready to work

with all parties to exchange policies, share experiences and develop flagship projects in key areas, in a joint effort to address the current crises and create a brighter future for all.

40. **Ms. Mamesah** (Indonesia) said that the multidimensional crises had unmasked the vulnerability of many aspects of human society, and resilience and risk-informed policies were therefore vital for building back better and preparing for future crises. In that connection, there needed to be a better understanding of the risks and consequences involved in policy-decisions and courses of action. At the same time, risk-informed policies should be based on scientific findings and on reliable and timely data.

41. The entities of the United Nations system and the subsidiary bodies of the Council had a pivotal role to play in promoting risk-informed policies and assisting Member States to build their resilience capacities. To do that, they needed to work in synergy, and not in silos, since they each possessed complementary resources, expertise and know-how, which were very important in the realization of concrete actions to help countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Funding was key to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and engagement with international financial institutions was required to support those furthest behind in achieving the Goals. There could be no one-size-fits-all solution, because each country and region had its own vulnerabilities, challenges, strengths and best practices. Solutions should be locally owned for actions to be bold and sustainable, and close engagement with Member States and regional organizations was therefore crucial. In that regard, Indonesia thanked ESCAP for its role in helping the Asia-Pacific countries to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and in increasing their achievement of the Goals.

42. **Mr. Chimbindi** (Zimbabwe) said that he would welcome more details on the adoption of a new business model by the World Bank Group, and wished to know how equitable the interventions of the World Bank Group were, under the auspices of its crisis response framework. With respect to disaster risk reduction, he would also welcome a progress update on the Early Warnings for All initiative and on any challenges encountered. Lastly, he wondered how the Council could work to ensure that development was placed at the centre of its work.

43. **Mr. Vinito** (India) said that in 2020 India had launched the Coalition for Disaster-Resilient Infrastructure, which functioned as an inclusive multi-stakeholder partnership of various national

Governments, United Nations agencies and programmes, and multilateral development banks, to generate and exchange knowledge on different aspects of the disaster resilience of infrastructure. The Coalition's members were curating a global flagship report on disaster and climate-resilient infrastructure, which would be the first comprehensive report on infrastructure resilience assessing the global risk of infrastructure systems. The report would be available to help Governments and policymakers adopt measures, while framing disaster preparedness and infrastructure policies, and its first edition would be launched at the Group of 20 Summit in September 2023.

44. The Coalition had also launched an initiative at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change concerning infrastructure for resilient island States, which would seek to provide technical support on infrastructure systems, promote the disaster and climate resilience of infrastructural assets in small island developing States, and share updated knowledge targeting specific infrastructure sectors. Furthermore, the Coalition had announced an infrastructure resilience accelerator fund, which was a dedicated international multi-donor trust fund, with a current total financing commitment of close to \$50 million. The fund had been established with the support of UNDP and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and would be managed by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, to support disaster-resilient infrastructure, especially in developing countries and small island developing States, through customized technical assistance, capacity-building, research, knowledge management and advocacy. The Coalition would be undertaking projects with various countries in such areas as drinking water, wastewater, electricity, roads, ocean and river ports, airports and mobile communications.

45. **Mr. Vongnorkeo** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that his delegation supported the theme chosen by the Council, since it complemented his country's priorities and immediate concerns. Enhancing support and assistance to the most vulnerable countries was particularly important to ensure that they were not left further behind. Indeed, while many economies had begun to show signs of recovery, groups of countries in special situations were still struggling to overcome multifaceted challenges. Emerging insecurity combined with the food, energy and climate crises had further hampered recovery efforts, and it was crucial for all United Nations agencies and international financial institutions to make more concerted efforts. Building resilience and preparedness to future shock remained critical and the members of the Council should focus on

finding ways and means of safeguarding hard-earned development gains.

46. **Ms. Merodio Gómez** (Vice-President of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico and Co-Chair of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management) said that her Committee was committed to delivering information for science and evidence-based decision-making, and there was a need for investment in high-quality and integrated information.

47. **Mr. Hounbo** (Director General, International Labour Organization (ILO)), speaking via video link, said that crisis situations were jeopardizing the achievement of key Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those that were socially related. In view of the nexus between the economic, social and environmental aspects of development, ILO would be launching a global coalition for social justice to address issues such as social solidarity, the economy, social protection, inequalities and decent jobs. The coalition would include multilateral entities and international financial institutions.

48. **Mr. Mountfield** (Vice President for Operations Policy and Country Services, World Bank Group), speaking via video link, said that the evolution of the World Bank Group would be overseen by its Board of Executive Directors and would focus on redefining the mission and vision of the Group, to better articulate its focus on poverty and shared prosperity, sustainability and resilience. An increasingly integrated approach needed to be adopted with respect to the issues of development, sustainability and resilience, and the Group would be examining its operating model with a view to changing its business practices, country-engagement approaches and instruments, as well as the way in which it allocated resources, in order to better deliver on its mission. The Group also planned to review its financial model, in terms of its capital adequacy frameworks and possible ways of expanding concessional financing. It gave the highest priority to the poorest countries, with a strong emphasis on Africa and fragile States, and provided substantial financing to the most indebted countries, with financing to countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence increasing to \$17 billion in 2022. While over \$30 billion in financing had been provided to Africa in the previous year, more needed to be done to make the international financial system more equitable, including via the partnership platform offered by the Council, and through global solidarity and fair burden-sharing.

49. **Ms. Alisjhabana** (Coordinator of the United Nations regional commissions and Executive Secretary

of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)) said that the different challenges, contexts and opportunities of the five regions were taken into account, and the roles of the regional commissions were leveraged when convening intergovernmental processes, conducting analytical work and supporting member States. At the regional level an increasingly unified approach had been adopted, through the regional collaborative platforms, to address regional development challenges and scale up support to countries.

50. **Ms. Mizutori** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction) said that the Early Warnings for All initiative needed to be an effective system for all, which was very ambitious. Early warning systems comprised four main pillars: good risk information, which would be led by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction; good forecasting and monitoring, which would be led by WMO; effective distribution of the warning system, which would be led by the International Telecommunication Union; and early action on the ground, which would be led by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Those four organizations, along with various United Nations agencies, were working together to establish a proper foundation for launching the initiative.

51. The *Executive Action Plan 2023–2027* for the Early Warnings for All initiative had been launched at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The first step of the process would be the mapping of existing capabilities and gaining a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each country. There was also a need to determine where further funding could be sourced, and coordination efforts would be made with international organizations and bilateral donors to coordinate all available support. The governance of such an ambitious system would require significant attention and a progress report would be submitted to the Secretary-General before the next session of the Conference of the Parties. An initial group of countries would be selected for the launch of the initiative on the basis of specific criteria, and more information would be provided to Member States in the near future.

Panel discussion: “Transformative policies for accelerating progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation”

52. **The President** said that the discussion would address the interlinkages between Sustainable Development Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation and other Goals, and would examine how the subsidiary bodies of the Council and United Nations entities were working on accelerating progress towards achieving Goal 6. The gender dimensions of Goal 6 had been addressed in the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women in several of its sessions, including in the context of climate change and environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes, and more details would be welcome on the interlinkages between Goals 5 and 6, and on the ways in which they could be harnessed to promote transformative policies and actions towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

53. **Ms. Joyini** (Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations and Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women), panellist, said that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls would make a crucial contribution to progress across all Sustainable Development Goals and targets, and the Commission on the Status of Women remained committed to supporting the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Water and sanitation were critical to the achievement of gender equality since their absence from household premises exposed women and girls to illness, harassment, violence and the burden of water collection and treatment, thereby hampering their ability to learn, earn an income and move around freely. Women and girls bore a disproportionate responsibility for using, providing and managing water, sanitation and hygiene in homes, but were not equally represented in WASH-related decision-making.

54. The Commission had consistently addressed the question of water and sanitation in a number of areas, which illustrated the linkages between Goals 5 and 6. Since women and girls bore the unequal burden of unpaid care and domestic work (target 5.4), the contribution and opportunity costs associated with the time spent on water collection, treatment and disposal, and on caring for family members, needed to be acknowledged and accounted for. The elimination of violence against women and girls (target 5.2) needed to be a key consideration in all water, sanitation and hygiene interventions and in the design of facilities, while access to sexual and reproductive health (target 5.6) included the management of menstrual and

perimenopausal hygiene and sanitary childbirth, which were areas requiring safely managed water, sanitation and hygiene. Furthermore, equal rights to economic resources (target 5.a), included equal access to water as an economic good, and required that gender inequalities in access to other resources be accounted for in water governance decisions, in order to prevent indirect discrimination, for example in pricing policies.

55. The Commission recommended that Governments, United Nations entities, international and regional organizations, and relevant stakeholders should: promote the full, effective and equal participation of women in decision-making on water and sanitation; take measures to reduce the time spent by women and girls on collecting household water; address the negative impact of inadequate and inequitable access to drinking water and sanitation on the access of girls to education; protect women and girls from all forms of violence while collecting household water and accessing sanitation facilities outside the home; ensure access to water, sanitation and hygiene, including menstrual health and hygiene, for all women and girls, especially those in vulnerable and marginalized situations; and ensure that all related services and infrastructure were gender-responsive, to bolster the resilience of all women and girls.

56. **The President** asked for examples of technological and innovative solutions for advancing Sustainable Goal 6 and harnessing interlinkages with other Goals.

57. **Mr. Al-Qurashi** (Acting Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development), panellist, said that science, technology and innovation could offer effective solutions to the challenges faced in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6, which was why “Ensuring safe water and sanitation for all: a solution through science, technology and innovation” had been selected as one of two themes for the Commission’s twenty-sixth session. Scarcity required more efficient and effective integrated water resource management, and technical approaches could be pivotal in achieving not only Goal 6, but also Goals 3, 5 and 9. Frontier technologies could be catalysts in monitoring water and sanitation infrastructure and accelerating achievement of Goal 6, and solutions using those technologies had proven effective by providing real-time information and customized feedback. At the same time, better forecasting and early warning systems were crucial to the preparation of responses to the impact of climate change, and the use of technology-based early warning systems and predictive models enabled early disaster threat preparation and knowledge of the areas likely to be badly affected.

58. At its intersessional meeting in October 2022, member States of Commission had proposed a number of recommendations for using science, technology and innovation to accelerate progress towards achieving Goal 6. They had underscored the need for technological innovation to be implemented in tandem with policy and governance innovation, social innovation and process innovation, and had called for technological and innovative solutions to be more responsive to real needs, since inaccessible technology was not much better than no technology. They had also called for the implementation of policies that supported concrete solutions, since effective and affordable low-tech water and sanitation tools were often more appropriate than advanced solutions for reaching underserved populations and for implementation in developing countries lacking the means to access and maintain complex and costly technology. Stakeholders from different sectors and backgrounds should be involved in the collective search for solutions, and global partnerships were crucial, not only for supporting access to science, technology and innovation, but also for enhancing knowledge-sharing.

59. **The President** asked how the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework was promoting transformative actions for the implementation of Goal 6 while also contributing to the achievement of other Goals, and what the interlinkages were between Goal 6 and those other Goals. He also wished to know how the Council, its subsidiary bodies and other entities of the United Nations system could help to accelerate progress towards achieving Goal 6, in collaboration with UN Water.

60. **Mr. Hounbo** (Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO)), panellist, speaking via video link in his capacity as the Chair of UN Water, said that the United Nations 2023 Water Conference would be a unique opportunity to address the global water and sanitation crisis, and it should serve as a catalyst for much greater progress with respect to the Water Action Decade and to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Council was urged to consider encouraging its subsidiary bodies to announce voluntary individual or collective commitments, and the main outcome document of the Conference would be a blueprint for the acceleration of progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6.

61. One of the five accelerators of the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework was governance, and for governance to lead to transformative action, water and sanitation needed to be integrated into all intergovernmental processes, at the local and global levels. Water also needed to be

incorporated into areas such as climate, the environment, disaster risk reduction, food security, gender, social justice and education, which were all related to different Goals. The lack of such an approach was hindering progress on the 2030 Agenda. Previous reports had highlighted significant gaps in the collective support to water and sanitation, and significant overlaps in efforts, confirming the need for a better division of labour, enhanced coordination and effective accountability systems. Current United Nations mechanisms and funding for achieving Goal 6 would not bring about the required transformation, which, in turn, would negatively impact other Goals. Increased leadership was needed from Member States to propel the desperately needed acceleration, and they were urged to consider the creation of a global water and sanitation platform under the auspices of the Council, to help address the challenges highlighted by the Secretary-General in 2017.

62. **The President** and asked how the WMO would help countries to accelerate their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular Goals 6 and 13. He also requested further insight into how the Water and Climate Coalition for Goal 6 was targeting investment in water data infrastructure and services to reduce impacts from water-related disasters.

63. **Mr. Zhang Wenjian** (Assistant Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)), panellist, said that the current situation was more challenging than it had ever been, since only a very small percentage of the water on the planet was fresh water, and most of that already limited amount was located in the polar region, in glaciers and underground reserves, leaving only a tiny fraction available for global use. Humans were the biggest consumers of fresh water, which was used primarily for agriculture, and with the global population currently standing at over 8 billion, the stress placed on global water resources was steadily increasing. The situation was being further exacerbated by climate change, and in Africa, where there was a need to grow more food, agriculture was being affected by serious droughts and increasingly frequent flooding.

64. As pointed out by the Secretary-General, one third of the inhabitants of the planet had no early warning system, and were therefore unequipped to address any major issue relating to water. The largest challenge facing WMO was the lack of sufficient data on water, and its aim was to enable countries to take advantage of the Early Warnings for All initiative to establish their own early warning systems, including water warnings. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction had already clearly elaborated a global United Nations framework, and WMO was seeking to have countries

strengthen their political views, to support their own water and meteorological systems and make hydrological data available, which would be of great scientific value. In addition to the Water and Climate Coalition, which comprised several United Nations entities and represented a joint effort, WMO was strongly committed to the Early Warnings for All initiative, since operational hydrology formed part of its mandate, and to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6. Collaboration with all United Nations agencies would be critical to that end.

65. **Mr. Mahmoud** (Observer for Egypt) said that the collective focus of the Council should be the achievement of all the water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, especially Goal 6. Water scarcity remained a compounding challenge, and the international community needed to address it urgently in order to sustain life on the planet and provide special support to countries faced with that challenge. Increased water consumption was not the only factor having a negative impact on water resources, since policies often had a greater impact on access to water than its physical availability. In some cases, unilateral policies driven by political imperatives, and not by hydrological or economic considerations, could lead to the deterioration of the overall welfare of water basins. The Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus presented an inclusive approach to securing a sustainable supply of water for life, agriculture and food production, ecosystem services, and other economic, social and environmental benefits.

66. There was a need for policies that were guided by the best available science. In that connection, the national water resources plan of Egypt combined the efficient use and recycling of renewable water resources with increasing reliance on non-conventional water sources. The plan was coupled with a food security policy that balanced food production and food imports, in order to address the peculiar water situation of the country. Water technologies and innovations, capacity-building, and training were much-needed, and policies should focus on investment models, in order to increase knowledge and enhance environmentally sustainable water infrastructure. A system-wide approach was needed within the United Nations to support Member States, and the position of United Nations special envoy on water should be established. Disruptions to the hydrological cycle threatened lives and caused loss and damage, mostly in wells and deltas and, as part of its presidency of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Egypt had

therefore launched a new action on water adaptation and resilience.

67. **Ms. Ríos Serna** (Colombia) said that Colombia was committed to organizing its national territory around water, in order to increase its resiliency and adaptation capacity, while placing the focus on human rights and gender-responsiveness, so as to guarantee a minimum amount of water for all its inhabitants. Her delegation believed that the synergy between Sustainable Development Goal 6 and other Goals should be made more evident, since the former was a catalyst for the achievement of other Goals, such as Goals 3 and 5.

68. To progress towards the achievement of Goal 6, Colombia believed that it was necessary to ensure a real commitment to climate action, especially with regard to the biggest polluters, since it had been established that climate change was one of the greatest threats to the availability of water resources. Developing countries needed access to financing, including through mechanisms geared towards the conservation of nature, and inequalities, including those between rural and urban zones, needed to be reduced. Furthermore, a transformative economic model should be established, focusing on life, rather than capital. More attention needed to be placed on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and more should be done to promote the full participation of women, young people, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and the civil society in the design and implementation of public policies. International financial institutions, multilateral banks and the United Nations development system played a key role in supporting developing nations to fully achieve Goal 6, and it was hoped that the United Nations 2023 Water Conference and Sustainable Development Goals Summit would result in effective progress on those matters, with substantial commitments to protect access to water and sanitation.

69. **Mr. Malovrh** (Slovenia) said that the recognition that the right to water and the right to sanitation were basic human rights should be taken into account during the design of policies, and the international community had already established water stewardship programmes and initiatives that called for universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene in supply chains. Governments needed to make good water stewardship mandatory for businesses, and consideration should be given to the establishment of internationally agreed standards for water, sanitation and hygiene in business and trade, as had been done for child labour.

70. The strengthening of water governance at all levels was a prerequisite for achieving the water-related Sustainable Development Goals and, at the global level,

the promotion of a United Nations system-wide approach was crucial. Such promotion could be done by strengthening the role of UN Water as an overall inter-agency coordinator; appointing a special envoy for water as a high-level advocate to ensure better synergies between sectors; and mainstreaming water in the reports of the Council and of all relevant commissions. To reduce pollution and the use of water, it was critical to promote resource use efficiency and use circular economy approaches in the context of water, at all levels, across the value chain and in all relevant sectors, supported by research and innovation. The United Nations 2023 Water Conference would be a mobilizing event that should enable progress towards the achievement of Goal 6 and result in a more water-secure world.

71. **Mr. Vinito** (India) said that the experience of his country had shown that political will was necessary for implementation, and that policies were only one part of the solution. The approach adopted by India had been very organic, and had gone from addressing basic needs to focusing on larger ones. In October 2014 a national campaign had been launched to encourage clean sanitation habits in rural areas, through wide-scale behavioural change, the construction of household and community toilets, and the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring construction and usage, which had resulted in the construction of over 100 million toilets by 2019. In the second phase of the campaign, the focus had been placed on greater hygiene awareness, sufficient water connections for sanitation systems and the treatment and recycling of waste. The bigger issue of waste treatment in cities had also been addressed, with mandatory garbage segregation, the removal of landfill sites and composting. In 2019 his Government had launched a complementary initiative to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual connections for all households in rural areas by 2024, which was designed to tackle current and future water and sanitation challenges.

72. Sustainability was a mandatory element of the abovementioned initiatives, along with the implementation of grey water management, water conservation and rainwater harvesting. Mass involvement had been essential for the success of the new approach to water and sanitation, and the importance of a community-based grass-roots approach and the role of women as leaders and drivers of initiatives had been crucial. Technology and innovation for water and sanitation had been key elements of the methods employed, owing to the geography and climatic conditions of India, and continuous education and training had been emphasized. The latest initiative

launched in India was aimed at fostering a sustainable and healthy lifestyle, driven by the concept of reducing, reusing and recycling, in order to help strike a balance between development, economic growth and sustainability. The United Nations had been a strong partner in those initiatives and India remained open to sharing them with the international community.

73. **Mr. Heartney** (United States of America) said that his delegation supported the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and Goal 6 in particular, and looked forward to the United Nations 2023 Water Conference, the high-level political forum, the Sustainable Development Goals Summit and the furtherance of the 2030 Agenda. The United States was one of the largest donors in the water sector and had invested in capacity-building, infrastructure, technology, private sector engagement and innovative financial instruments to mobilize local capital. It was also an active development partner in several water basins throughout the world, and his Government had made water a foreign policy priority, with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recently announcing a new \$1.2 billion three-year commitment to promote foreign assistance on sustainable water security and sanitation. The latter was in addition to the steps already taken by his Government to improve water security in the United States, including through investments in a bipartisan infrastructure law to increase drought resilience, replace lead pipes and develop water infrastructure, in order to deliver safe drinking water to families and children.

74. **Mr. Chimbindi** (Zimbabwe) said that the issues of water availability, access, safety and affordability were very important, and further information from the panellists on pollution, wastewater management and waste disposal would be appreciated, to see how those issues affected the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 6 and its associated targets. He also wished to know how countries could ensure a balanced focus on both climate change and water, given the interlinkages between the two issues. At the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change a loss and damage mechanism had been established, and he wondered whether the link between water and climate change could be taken into account in the implementation modalities of that mechanism. Panellists should make recommendations for dealing with the overexploitation and wastage of available water resources.

75. **Ms. Joyini** (Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations and Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women) said that

technology was important for increasing access to water and monitoring sanitation services, and her Commission would be considering the theme of “Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls” at its 2023 session. The sixty-seventh session of the Commission would be focusing on leveraging digital technology as an inclusion tool for access to services. It would therefore be interesting to see what the outcomes of the United Nations 2023 Water Conference would be, given the focus on the interlinkages between technology and water, and to subsequently compare those linkages to the ones established by the Commission. In the same vein, the Commission would be examining science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, which was also important in the area of water, and it would be interesting to consider how young women in particular could be encouraged to access education in that specific area.

76. Another panellist had pointed out that water was a catalyst for various Sustainable Development Goals, and the United Nations 2023 Water Conference would hopefully lead to clear outcomes in terms of gender equality and women empowerment. The Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework should be used to mainstream water into other areas, including gender equality. She agreed with the need to focus on water from a gender-responsive and human rights perspective, and such recommendations should be included in the reports of the Council, as well as those of its different subsidiary bodies. Indeed, as drivers of change, women were important allies in ensuring that all changes were impactful.

77. **Mr. Al-Qurashi** (Acting Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development) said that many United Nations agencies were working together in the area of water, and the United Nations 2023 Water Conference would hopefully lead to concrete outcomes and synergies between the different agencies. Such synergies would help to ensure that water remained available to the rich and the poor, and to developed and developing countries, while encouraging more youth and women to work in that area.

78. **Mr. Hounbo** (Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO)), speaking via video link in his capacity as the Chair of UN Water, said that there were over 30 United Nations agencies intervening in the area of water, which explained the long-standing efforts to create and build on synergies, and the call for the appointment of a special envoy for water was under consideration by the Secretary-General. With respect to wastewater management,

unfortunately, 80 percent of wastewater was discharged into the environment, untreated. The nexus between water, the climate and the environment needed to be taken into account in major decisions, preparations and agendas. Since agriculture accounted for a substantial portion of available freshwater resources, the use of technology would be key for developing smarter agricultural practices and contributing to better management of climate change. All participants were encouraged to follow up on the points raised during the meeting at the United Nations 2023 Water Conference and to participate in the finalization of the outcome documents, in order to ensure that individual and collective commitments would be made for concrete follow-up action.

79. **Mr. Zhang Wenjian** (Assistant Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)) said that the international community needed to join forces at the United Nations 2023 Water Conference, which was of critical importance to WMO. The call by members to use the best science and technology to address water scarcity and water issues in general was highly appreciated. There needed to be stronger support for and collaboration with WMO moving forward, and 2023 was a special year for WMO, since it marked 150 years of existence and meaningful collaboration. It also marked the sixtieth anniversary of the World Weather Watch programme, which continued to build trust in science and technology, and had made significant progress in the area of weather forecasting, in collaboration with other agencies.

80. In response to concerns about water pollution, WMO had approved a hydrological plan in 2022 to address the quantity and quality of water, as well as water pollution. However, no scientific progress could be made and those issues could not be properly managed unless environmental issues were also addressed. Country support to the United Nations and to all its agencies was critical and highly appreciated, and WMO had greatly benefited from the support provided by USAID for its hydrological programme and for its Systematic Observations Financing Facility.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.