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Chair: Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria)
later: Mr. Al-thani (Vice-Chair) (Qatar)

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

Agenda item 21: Groups of countries in special situations

(a) Follow-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries ([A/77/73-E/2022/53](#) and [A/77/291](#))

(b) Follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries ([A/77/89](#), [A/77/89/Add.1](#) and [A/77/269](#))

1. **Ms. Fatima** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, as contained in document [A/77/73-E/2022/53](#), said that owing to the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the General Assembly had decided to reschedule the Conference. The first part, held in New York, in March 2022, had adopted the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (Doha Programme of Action), which had subsequently been endorsed by the General Assembly on 1 April 2022. The second part of the Conference would be held in Doha in March 2023.

2. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic remained disproportionate in the least developed countries, further exacerbating the multiple crises already faced by those countries. However, the Doha Programme of Action was an opportunity to reset the least developed countries on a path towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, as they recovered from the pandemic and progressed towards graduation. It set out an ambitious set of comprehensive actions and targets aimed at forging renewed partnership between the least developed countries and development partners, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders. Its endorsement by the General Assembly would open the way for prompt and full implementation by all stakeholders and partners.

3. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRRL) was preparing a monitoring and reporting framework to facilitate the measuring of progress and implementation, and had been advocating for an early start to implementation. The Group of Friends of the Least Developed Countries and development partners had shown strong support for that approach and Ministers from the least developed countries had

adopted a comprehensive and ambitious declaration to take the Doha Programme of Action forward. The latter's success would be measured by its implementation, primarily in the least developed countries, and would begin with its mainstreaming into national development processes. A meeting of resident coordinators stationed in the least developed countries had been convened, as had a meeting of national focal points, to support that vital work.

4. The United Nations would play a critical role in the success of the Doha Programme of Action, and the entire development system had been called upon to coordinate delivery plans for its six priority areas of action. Work had advanced on preparing a road map for accelerated implementation and a meeting would be convened in the coming months to call for intensified support for the least developed countries. Her Office had also begun to follow up on several mandates given to the Secretary-General, notably with respect to graduation support, by convening a meeting of the Inter-agency Task Force on Graduation of the Least Developed Countries and hosting an expert workshop for graduating the least developed countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Additional requests for graduation support were being considered.

5. With regard to preparations for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Secretary-General had reissued invitations to Heads of State and Government and arrangements were well under way for the various tracks, namely South-South cooperation, the parliamentary forum, the private sector forum, the civil society forum and the youth forum. Expectations from those groups were high and they were expected to showcase efforts in favour of the least developed countries and announce new initiatives and partnerships. The stakes were also very high and Member States were encouraged to mobilize participation at the highest level. The Government of Qatar was to be commended for its generous hosting offer and continued support.

6. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on food security in the least developed countries: options for a system of stockholding and complementary means at the global, regional and subregional levels ([A/77/291](#)), she said that the report responded to a request made by Member States in the Doha Programme of Action to explore solutions to the disproportionate impact of external shocks on food systems in the least developed countries. The COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions and conflicts in different parts of the world had further compromised the food security of the most vulnerable and had reversed sustainable

development progress in the least developed countries, making it necessary to adopt a multipronged approach.

7. The report called for the establishment, in collaboration with multilateral organizations, of a special food reserve system for the least developed countries, which could channel resources to the people most in need. Stockholding was a vital part of the food security solution and required scaled up regional and global action. The report mentioned several instruments for supporting the food reserve system and addressing food insecurity and food emergencies, including a food import financing facility to help the least developed countries access concessional financing. Those countries were often unable to access credit to address short-term emergencies, and access to resources on a concessional basis would help them tackle soaring food import bills and finance key agricultural inputs, such as seeds, fertilizers and pesticides.

8. Capacity-building initiatives could help the least developed countries expand their technical capabilities, while facilitating technical consultations on national and regional policy responses for addressing food emergencies. Concrete project proposals to operationalize such initiatives would be shared, and existing instruments, such as the Food Shock Window of the International Monetary Fund, could serve as a model for proposed facilities.

9. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 (Vienna Programme of Action), as contained in document [A/77/269](#), she said that the progress made in the eight years following the adoption of the Vienna Programme of Action had fallen short of achieving the targets. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic and global conditions had exacerbated the situation by adversely impacting development in the landlocked developing countries and compounding their existing vulnerabilities. Poverty was on the rise, food prices were soaring and the threat of food insecurity was looming over those countries, while their external debt had increased significantly, driving nine of them to the brink of and two others into debt distress.

10. With respect to implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, transit policy issues were a key priority. Border restrictions and supply chain disruptions ensuing from the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in major trade and transit bottlenecks, and current and projected geopolitical tensions had worsened the situation, increasing costs and transit times for landlocked developing countries. Another priority area was international trade, which was

estimated to have rebounded in 2021. While merchandise exports had increased, that growth had been driven by increasing commodity prices and was not sustainable. The export competitiveness of landlocked developing countries had been significantly undermined by increasing trade costs and supply chain disruptions. Full implementation of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation, while more urgent than ever, remained low among transit and landlocked developing countries.

11. Landlocked developing countries were continuing their pursuit of regional integration and cooperation in order to overcome geographical challenges, but structural economic transformation remained limited. Many of them lacked adequate transport infrastructures, and efforts to develop and maintain such infrastructure had been thwarted by economic challenges and resource constraints. The COVID-19 pandemic had drawn attention to the urgent need to scale up digital solutions, but landlocked developing countries were lagging behind, with Internet usage rates far below the world average. Similarly, the proportion of their populations with access to electricity was much lower than the world average in 2020.

12. With respect to means of implementation, official development assistance (ODA) to landlocked developing countries had risen by 14.5 per cent between 2019 and 2020. However, without a corresponding increase in development budgets, ODA flows to such countries were at risk of being constricted, at a time when they were most needed. Those flows continued to be concentrated in a few landlocked developing countries, with only five of them receiving 45 per cent of the allocation. In the same vein, foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to that group of countries had also gone up by 31 per cent between 2020 and 2021, but continued to be concentrated in fewer sectors. Remittances had also increased by 8.8 per cent over the same period, but, overall, those modest gains were insufficient to address the magnitude of the multiple crises.

13. A transformative recovery aimed at rebuilding the long-term resilience of landlocked developing countries was therefore critical and, in that regard, the Secretary-General had underscored the need to do the following: promote the proper functioning of transit transport and trade corridors and ensure freedom of transit; promote regional and subregional cooperation to facilitate the movement of goods and services; support sustainable, climate resilient, inclusive and affordable transport systems; further strengthen information and communications technologies and energy infrastructures; develop trade and development policies that would

address the post-COVID-19 environment; foster productive capacities, export diversification and integration into global and regional value chains; and develop innovative instruments such as debt-for-development swaps, while leveraging the role of private capital markets.

14. Collective efforts were needed from all stakeholders to accelerate the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, and the United Nations and other international organizations would continue to provide support to that end. That would include pursuing the priorities set out in the road map for accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in the remaining five years and enhancing national implementation by leveraging the resident coordinator system, to strengthen coordination at all levels. The third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries would take place in 2024, and would focus on enhanced support for those countries. The modalities resolution for the Conference would be adopted at the current session of the General Assembly, and was critical for outlining priorities for overcoming setbacks and developing a transformative agenda aimed at achieving sustainable development in the landlocked developing countries.

15. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it was alarming that only four countries had graduated from the list of the least developed countries at the end of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020. The least developed countries were the world's poorest and most vulnerable nations, and victims of global inequality with respect to access to vaccines, finance and the Internet. Furthermore, recent geopolitical conflicts and tensions had disproportionately impacted the global South, and particularly countries in special situations.

16. Landlocked developing countries were faced with their own challenges, and their lack of territorial access to the sea and remoteness from world markets, when coupled with high transit costs and risks, posed a serious threat to their socioeconomic development. They continued to suffer the deadly impact of COVID-19 pandemic, yet only 26 per cent of their population had been fully vaccinated by the end of April 2022, compared with 59 per cent worldwide. Adverse global economic conditions, including stalled growth, surging inflation, the energy crisis, high sovereign debt levels, volatile commodity prices, rising food prices and reduced global food security, skyrocketing shipping costs, supply chain and production disruptions, and elevated shipping and trade costs, were limiting their

capacity to recover from the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

17. To fulfil its commitment to leave no one behind, the international community needed to start with those who were furthest behind. The Doha Programme of Action would strengthen efforts to address the problems of the poorest, with its ambitious target of enabling 15 additional countries to graduate from least developed status by 2031. That goal would not be possible, however, without revived global partnership. The second part of Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries was expected to focus on building partnerships and political momentum to ensure that the Doha Programme of Action was implemented in a timely manner. Similarly, accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action would go a long way towards the achievement of its objectives in the remaining years. Work also needed to be done in preparation for the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries.

18. At the implementation phase of both the Vienna Programme of Action and the Doha Programme of Action, the focus must be placed on key priorities for developing countries in special situations, including the following needs: to address COVID-19 vaccine inequality by ensuring adequate and timely access to quality, safe and effective vaccines for all, through the scaling up of local and regional production capacities; for developed countries to fulfil their historical commitment to provide 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) as ODA, and between 0.15 per cent and 0.25 per cent of that ODA to the least developed countries; to offer quick and sound breakthrough debt management, debt swaps and debt buy-back options to countries at risk of or already in debt distress; to ensure the normal functioning of open markets, global supply chain connectivity and cross-border travel for essential purposes; to reallocate \$250 billion in unutilized special drawing rights, so as to quickly provide additional liquidity to countries in distress; and to resolutely address the threat posed by climate change, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities.

19. Developed countries needed to fulfil their pledges with respect to annual climate finance and strive for a better balance between mitigation and adaptation. A loss and damage financial facility should be created to compensate developing countries for the impacts of climate change and all industrial countries should lead efforts to reduce global emissions and reach net zero well before 2050.

20. **Mr. Zahir** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that owing to the inherent challenges they faced, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States had been recognized by the General Assembly and the international community as the most vulnerable countries. In view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities, small island developing States remained a special case for sustainable development. It therefore came as no surprise that those countries were the hardest hit by ongoing global crises. The adverse impacts of climate change were worsening, and people living in the least developed countries were the most exposed to food and water insecurity. Landlocked developing countries were also significantly impacted, as they depended heavily on natural resources and agriculture. Loss and damage arising from climate change had reached unprecedented levels in small island developing States.

21. Health challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic were still prevalent in the least developed countries, owing to low vaccination rates and limited capacity to respond to new variants or other emerging diseases. The wider socioeconomic impacts had also disproportionately set back sustainable development for countries in special situations. Pandemic-related restrictions had resulted in far-reaching repercussions in critical sectors such as commodity exports and tourism. While those industries struggled to recover, debt burdens and increasing debt service costs posed further fiscal challenges, diverting critical resources away from sustainable development objectives. At the same time, increased world market prices resulting from the conflict in Ukraine had affected countries that depended on imported food, energy and fertilizers, including the least developed countries. Those persistent and emerging challenges faced by the countries in special situations needed to be addressed within the context of their respective development frameworks.

22. In that regard, the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action was welcome and the convening of the second part of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries was keenly anticipated. The prompt and full implementation of the Programme's six key focus areas would enable the least developed countries to overcome the emerging challenges they faced and get back on track for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The international community needed to support those countries in their efforts, including through the provision of the required means of implementation and sustained capacity. While the impacts of the ongoing crises had been factored into the Doha Programme of

Action, it was important to address those impacts in the implementation of existing frameworks, such as the Vienna Programme of Action. Climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and the situation in Ukraine had hindered progress across all six priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action, and the United Nations system and Member States needed to enhance support to landlocked developing countries, in order to accelerate implementation and ensure that outstanding work was completed in the remaining years.

23. In the lead-up to the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, it was noteworthy that the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States would be taking place during the same year. To ensure inclusive and ambitious outcomes, the United Nations system needed to expeditiously commence the preparatory work and allocate the necessary resources for the respective processes. All relevant stakeholders were encouraged to start preparing for the two conferences and consider the types of meaningful support that could be provided to those countries. Strengthened commitments were needed from partners to address priority areas in the context of the global situation and countries' national circumstances. While the vulnerabilities of countries in special situations had placed them at a comparable disadvantage, those same vulnerabilities had fostered innovation, creative solutions and positive change.

24. **Mr. Kelapile** (Botswana), speaking on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, said that the Group supported the Group of Least Developed Countries in its renewed and strengthened commitments and partnerships, following the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action, and looked forward to the second part of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. The least developed countries and landlocked developing countries shared many attributes and vulnerabilities, and it was therefore important to address the challenges encountered by both groups of countries in a coherent and coordinated fashion.

25. His Group would work constructively to ensure seamless and efficient modalities for the convening of the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, in anticipation of impactful outcomes that would build on the achievements of the Vienna Programme of Action. The adoption of the modalities resolutions at the current session of the General Assembly would set the preparatory process in motion and allow for an assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. Since the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries would take place shortly after the Fifth United Nations Conference on the

Least Developed Countries, his Group intended to build on the experiences emanating from the latter, and would continue to rely on the support offered by UN-OHRLS, the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders.

26. The Group of Friends of Landlocked Developing Countries would be revived to ensure inclusive engagement and promote partnerships around his Group's interests, and an invitation would be extended to all Member States to take part in that initiative. As the demand for the services of UN-OHRLS grew, owing to the simultaneous and successive convening of mandated conferences, it would need stronger support from Member States to effectively fulfil its mandate. In that regard, expedited efforts were needed to mobilize voluntary contributions to the trust fund in support of activities undertaken by UN-OHRLS, which was running very low. Continued collective action was critical for garnering greater international support for efforts to advance sustainable development in the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries.

27. **Mr. Vongnorkeo** (Lao People's Democratic Republic), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the international community continued to face unprecedented crises, which had an even greater impact on the groups of countries in special situations, owing to their weak economic structures, fragile health systems, limited social protection systems and inadequate financial resources. The least developed countries were most likely to suffer from the consequences of the projected economic slowdown and landlocked developing countries faced even greater problems, given their lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness from markets and dependence on transit nations. For those groups of countries to fulfil national and global development agendas, they would need the support and assistance of the international community.

28. ASEAN had been implementing a comprehensive recovery framework aimed at addressing the social and economic ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic. It underscored the need to continue strengthening its COVID-19 response fund and the region's capacity to prevent, prepare for, detect, respond to and recover from new diseases. ASEAN highlighted the importance of narrowing regional development gaps and bolstering regional economic integration, through the consolidation of the regional economic community, in order to facilitate the seamless movement of goods, services, investments, capital and skilled labour. ASEAN commended the progress made in implementing its master plan on connectivity and the

work of its integration initiative, and welcomed the findings of an assessment of future sustainable infrastructure trends and priorities.

29. ASEAN welcomed the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action, which represented a new generation of commitments between the least developed countries and their development partners. However, the COVID-19 pandemic had threatened to reverse the progress made on several priorities of the Doha and Programme of Action and the Vienna Programme of Action, and had exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and challenges, such as poverty, hunger, food insecurity and high debt levels. More importantly, the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries remained exposed to external shocks and climate-related phenomena and, in that regard, ASEAN had made efforts to address climate change and disaster risk management, while recognizing the critical role played by the United Nations system in mobilizing support for sustainable recovery. Increased international support and assistance were needed to facilitate immediate action, midterm recovery efforts and long-term strategic measures aimed at mitigating the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

30. **Ms. Chimbiri Molande** (Malawi), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that the least developed countries were the hardest hit by the impacts of multiple global crises. Those countries were structurally disadvantaged, had very little domestic capacity or fiscal space to cope with challenges, and could not afford to launch adequate safety net programmes and stimulus packages to address the impacts. It was estimated that eight to nine years of development gains in the least developed countries and other low-income countries had been eliminated.

31. The prevalence of undernourishment in the least developed countries had increased, while the human development index had decreased. Poverty levels were rising and social protection coverage stood at a mere 14 per cent. Twenty-seven of the least developed countries were either in debt distress or at a high risk of debt distress, since 14 per cent of their revenue was being spent on debt interest. Vaccination rates currently stood at approximately half of the global target. Close to 70 per cent of all climate-related disasters occurred in the least developed countries, yet they received less than 20 per cent of global adaptation finance.

32. Member States of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development were allocating only 0.09 per cent of their GNI, or \$31 billion, to ODA, instead of the targeted 0.15 to 0.2 per cent, and FDI in the least developed countries stood at \$28 billion in

2021, representing less than 2 per cent of global FDI. However, total external debt in the latter stood at \$484 billion and their external debt service amounted to \$37 billion in 2021, which meant that they were paying \$6 billion more in debt service than they were receiving in ODA, and \$9 billion more than they were receiving in FDI. Furthermore, the least developed countries' share of global exports stood at a paltry 0.93 per cent, far below the 2 per cent target set out in the Sustainable Development Goals, and their trade deficit totalled a record-breaking \$113 billion in 2021.

33. The significant gap between urgent needs and the availability of resources was widening every day, and the international community needed to set a new paradigm in the area of cooperation with the least developed countries. The Doha Programme of Action was expected to do so through new commitments and strategies for the timely implementation of its goals, targets and deliverables. Initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges faced by the least developed countries needed to be substantiated with specific blueprints for their implementation and supported by Member States.

34. **Ms. Aondona** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the worsening impact of climate change had wiped out years of progress made in alleviating poverty, especially in the least developed countries. The African continent was home to 33 of the 46 least developed countries in the world, which had played no role in bringing about the climate crisis, but were the worst affected and least equipped to mitigate and adapt to its impacts.

35. The COVID-19 pandemic had brought about significant disruptions, with major socioeconomic implications, forcing millions more people into poverty and absolute poverty. The wages and jobs of a large number of workers – and in particular women – in the least developed countries had been disproportionately affected, especially during the lockdown, since most of them worked in the informal economy. The pandemic had also caused an unprecedented disruption in the provision of education in the least developed countries, and the combination of being out of school and the loss of family livelihoods could leave girls particularly vulnerable, and exacerbate exclusion and inequality. Those losses could potentially accumulate into significant and permanent learning losses, as many children could fall behind and never catch up. While many of the least developed countries had increased the use of e-education and remote learning platforms, those solutions depended heavily on access to electricity, the Internet, digital skills, online tools and appropriate devices. As such, learning inequalities were widening

between developed and developing countries, and between socioeconomic groups within countries.

36. The Group called for urgent and specific attention and support to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States, notably in terms of equitable access to vaccines and vaccination campaigns. It remained concerned by persistent inequalities in the access to treatments, vaccines and health-related technologies, and underscored the need to mobilize additional financial resources for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Group had previously highlighted the need for a smooth and sustainable graduation strategy for the least developed countries, which should be consistent with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, for improved coordination of the United Nations system, and for support from development and trading partners.

37. To achieve structural transformation in Africa, Agenda 2063 of the African Union had established human development as a key factor for prosperity and growth. Human capital development had emerged as a critical issue, since by 2050, Africa was expected to have the largest and most youthful workforce in the world. As such, urgent investments were needed in secondary and university education, along with the strengthening of science, technology, research and innovation, the reinforcement of linkages with industry, the development of vocational, technical and polytechnic education, and support for on-the-job training and continued education.

38. A human-centred framework was recommended for a resilient and inclusive recovery, to set the least developed countries on a path towards sustainable development. There was a need for renewed partnership with the least developed countries, as well as urgent global and national actions on issues relating to employment, industrial policies, institutional reform, the promotion of an enabling business environment, and investment in the building of human and productive capacities. Given that trade played a key role in fostering growth, the African Continental Free Trade Area would help boost intra-African trade and enable the transformation of agriculture and agribusinesses. In turn, there would be benefits for the manufacturing sector, financial services, infrastructural development and employment. South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation needed to be strengthened and institutionalized, and the Group would continue to support the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and all developing countries.

39. **Mr. Al-thani** (Qatar) said that his country was proud to co-chair the Group of Friends of the Least Developed Countries along with Türkiye and Belgium. Multilateral cooperation to support development efforts in the least developed countries had been advanced by the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action at the first part of the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Qatar looked forward to hosting the second part of that conference from 4 to 9 March 2023 in Doha, where the international community would have an opportunity to create the partnerships that would translate that Programme of Action into reality. The least developed countries could count on Qatar to do its part to help them achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

40. **Mr. Rupende** (Zimbabwe) said that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic had been particularly severe in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, like Zimbabwe, and small island developing States. Those countries were particularly vulnerable owing to their structural limitations, which significantly limited their prospects of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 (A/77/269) was a sound foundation for the Committee's deliberations on countries in special situations.

41. While progress had been made towards implementing the Vienna Programme of Action and realizing the Goals, current crises had slowed that progress and exacerbated vulnerabilities and structural inequalities, leading to detrimental impacts on human health, economies and education. Debt levels were rising, resilience was threatened by inequality and unemployment, and social inequalities were widening, disproportionately affecting women and girls. Since global inequalities needed to be reduced to build back better, it was critical for development partners and the United Nations system to enhance support to landlocked developing countries, in order to ensure access to the necessary resources.

42. At the national level, Zimbabwe had mainstreamed most of the targets of the 2030 Agenda and had aligned the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action with the objectives of its national development strategy for the period 2021–2025. Its national sustainable development plan prioritized five key areas: the economy and job creation; the reduction of poverty and vulnerability; the reduction of inequalities; strengthening access to education, health care, water and sanitation; and environmental governance. Efforts

were also under way to ensure alignment with the objectives of the various intergovernmental frameworks.

43. His Government expected the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries to comprehensively assess the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and international support measures, particularly in terms of ODA, investment and trade. It looked forward to the adoption of additional support measures to assist landlocked developing countries and the identification of new and emerging challenges and opportunities, as well as the means to address them. The United Nations system needed to continue playing a crucial role in redirecting support to landlocked developing countries and in forging more strategic partnerships for tapping into new avenues of financing.

44. **Mr. Muhith** (Bangladesh) said that Bangladesh welcomed the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action and looked forward to working with all stakeholders to adopt the practical solutions identified therein, in order to address food insecurity in the least developed countries. The success of the 2030 Agenda would not be determined by developed countries, but, rather, by the least developed and other vulnerable countries. Transformative changes were needed in the lives and livelihoods of those who were furthest behind, in terms of poverty alleviation, hunger, health services, education, gender parity, climate adaptation and decent jobs for all. The COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and global conflicts had exacerbated the challenges facing the least developed countries, and decades of development gains were being reversed. Enhanced and tailored support was needed to tackle the impacts of the crises and build resilience against future shocks.

45. Robust global, regional and national partnerships were needed to implement the Doha Programme of Action and meet its time-bound targets. A comprehensive package of deliverables had been proposed to respond to the challenges faced by the least developed countries, and the implementation of those deliverables would require the full cooperation of development partners, the United Nations system, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks, the private sector and civil society organizations. The successful implementation of the Doha Programme of Action would depend on the means of implementation provided, and there was a need to scale up ODA, concessional financing and technology transfers in order to enhance productive capacities and ensure adequate investment in infrastructural and human development efforts.

46. The second part of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would provide an excellent opportunity to create the political momentum required for the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action. Development partners were invited to participate in the Conference at the highest level and demonstrate their commitment to supporting the least developed countries. The Committee's resolution on that group of countries would be critical for ensuring the implementation and deliverables of the Doha Programme of Action, and his delegation looked forward to ensuring that such a resolution would be commensurate with the needs and realities on the ground. A record number of 16 countries were at different stages of graduation from the least developed category, and they needed tailored support to revitalize the graduation process. Development partners and developed countries were urged to provide specific support measures to all graduated countries, for a specific period of time, and in a predictable fashion. Adequate resources should be provided to UN-OHRLLS to enable it to fulfil its mandate and play its role in the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action.

47. **Mr. Vorshilov** (Mongolia) said that stalled economic growth, surging inflation, rising food and energy prices, supply chain disruptions and elevated shipping and trade costs were constraining the ability of landlocked developing countries to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Less than a third of the people living in those countries was vaccinated and undernourishment was two times higher than the world average. A transformative recovery aimed at building long-term resilience was therefore critical, and, to that end, landlocked developing countries needed to increase their access to COVID-19 vaccines and strengthen their health systems. Investment and technical assistance were required from bilateral and multilateral donors and partners in the different areas of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda. Landlocked developing countries, transit countries and regional organizations needed to work together to ensure freedom of transit and the smooth functioning of transit, transport and trade corridors.

48. Mongolia remained committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the Vienna Programme of Action, and had undertaken to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as long-term social, economic, climate and environmental challenges. His Government had launched a new recovery policy aimed at solving major economic constraints, and hoped that the policy would serve as a road map to ramp up industrialization, decrease vulnerabilities, stabilize economic growth,

increase gross domestic product (GDP) and improve the livelihood of citizens.

49. Mongolia was striving to develop sustainable connectivity, despite the challenges it faced as a landlocked country, and had presented a working paper on improving air connectivity in landlocked developing countries at the forty-first session of the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization. Once that working paper was approved, an aviation needs analysis study of the 32 landlocked developing countries would be conducted in order to better understand the nature and extent of existing challenges. An international think tank for landlocked developing countries had been set up in Mongolia to conduct research and advocacy, with a view to enhancing their capacity to reduce poverty and benefit from international trade and human development.

50. **Mr. Rai** (Nepal) said that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and geopolitical tensions were devastating the planet and its inhabitants, especially in poorer countries. Countries in special situations were the most affected, with millions of their citizens being pushed into extreme poverty. Food and fuel prices were soaring and inflation was at a record high, while inequalities continued to rise within and among countries. The tourism, trade and transport sectors were the hardest hit, and global supply chains had been disrupted. Rising interest rates and currency depreciation had worsened the situation, leaving many countries in debt distress. As a result, development gains were at risk of being reversed, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 would be impossible without international assistance.

51. Only six of the least developed countries had been able to graduate to middle-income status, despite the implementation of four consecutive 10-year Programmes of Action, which, in hindsight, had proved to be insufficient. The Doha Programme of Action needed to be effectively implemented in alignment with the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda), in order to achieve inclusive, resilient and sustainable development.

52. Landlocked developing countries faced unique challenges, since their remoteness and geographical isolation made them highly vulnerable to economic, environmental and external shocks. Some landlocked countries, including Nepal, also fell into the least developed category, and required additional support to tackle their specific issues. Nepal was making significant efforts to graduate by 2026 and called on

development partners to strengthen cooperation, in order to make its graduation smooth and sustainable.

53. More robust global partnerships were indispensable for resilient post-COVID-19 recovery to be achieved and for progress to be made towards realizing the Goals. COVID-19 vaccines needed to be made available in poorer countries, where vaccination rates were the lowest. In the same vein, ODA and GNI commitments with respect to the least developed countries needed to be fulfilled, and more climate financing needed to be provided to developing countries, with half of that financing earmarked for climate adaptation. A financial facility needed to be created to address loss and damage from climate change in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. There was also a need for investment in physical and digital connectivity, with a view to economic integration, and international financial institutions and multilateral development banks should increase their support to countries in special situations. Urgent action was required to meet the targets of the Vienna Programme of Action.

54. **Mr. Monyane** (Lesotho) said that the Committee's outcomes and decisions should support countries in special situations, notably the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, which had experienced some of the worst impacts of global crises, despite their minimal contributions to the latter. To that end, the United Nations system needed to do more to ensure the implementation of the Programmes of Action for those countries, while seeking to accelerate their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Similarly, in order to enable sustainable progress, developed countries needed to scale up their support for the accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the Doha Programme of Action.

55. The COVID-19 pandemic had further exposed the vulnerabilities of countries in special situations, which had been hardest hit by its adverse impacts, as a result of their fragile health systems and limited resources. Despite those vulnerabilities, vaccination rates remained alarmingly low in the least developed countries and landlocked countries, and urgent action by the international community was needed to increase access to COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines, and strengthen health systems. Development partners needed to increase and fulfil their ODA commitments to countries in special situations, and more budget support should be provided to development agencies, given that the conflict in Eastern Europe had shifted funds away from development to more humanitarian issues.

56. Strong regional and international partnerships were vital for the promotion of regional integration and trade, through the upgrading of transport infrastructures. Development partners and transit countries were urged to work together with landlocked developing countries to enhance cross-border collaborations, by minimizing disruptions to international transport. The UN-OHRLLS needed to be strengthened and capacitated, in the light of its important work.

57. **Mr. Chala** (Ethiopia) said that more than 40 per cent of the world population was living in a situation of extreme vulnerability to economic and environmental shocks. Development challenges faced by the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries posed serious concerns that could not be overlooked by the international community. Multiple crises had caused significant damage to the economies of those countries, and urgent collective action was required to address the ensuing challenges. Landlocked developing countries continued to face several obstacles owing to their geographical locations and other structural issues, such as infrastructural and transport gaps, which hindered regional integration and slowed structural transformation processes, thereby undermining efforts to meet the objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action. Development challenges were further aggravated by financial, technological and institutional shortcomings.

58. Despite those multidimensional difficulties, Ethiopia had adopted and implemented global development goals, including those of the Doha Programme of Action, by mainstreaming and integrating them into its national development plans. Measures had been taken to reverse dependency on commodities for external trade, low per capita income, and vulnerability to economic and environmental shocks. To that end, a process of economic reform had been launched, aimed at transforming the microeconomy, improving the productivity of economic sectors and achieving structural transformation. His Government was determined to create an enabling environment for private sector development by attracting domestic and foreign private investors through the privatization and liberalization of public enterprises, and by opening up the economy and its service sectors.

59. The Ethiopian national transport policy was set to realize an integrated, accessible and globally competitive transport system, which would improve regional, continental and international economic integration. Encouraging progress had been made in the expansion of road, railway and air transport services, and collaboration with neighbouring transit countries was under way to establish and maintain effective transit

systems based on common interests. Despite the advances made, a lot remained to be done to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. National efforts needed to be further strengthened for the implementation of existing multilateral commitments and the enhancement of cooperation.

60. **Ms. Baimarro** (Sierra Leone) said that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the world was facing unprecedented economic crises, which were derailing the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action. The integration and mainstreaming of that Programme of Action into national development strategies would be the most effective means of implementation, and would serve to build capacities, facilitate monitoring and evaluating, and provide valuable insight.

61. Sierra Leone was in the process of implementing a medium-term national development plan for the period 2019–2023, which was closely aligned with the global development agenda, and primarily focused on human capital development, economic diversification, energy, transport and communications infrastructure, and disaster management. As it worked on a successor plan, her Government remained committed to advancing on the agreed priority areas, in accordance with global development frameworks, such as the Doha Programme of Action. It would cooperate with all development partners to ensure the consistency of policies and strategies, mutual accountability and effective delivery to the population.

62. Sierra Leone remained hopeful for stronger and continued commitments from global development stakeholders to address the challenges confronting the least developed countries, including crippling debt burdens, the looming climate crisis and the digital divide. Overcoming those obstacles would be the surest way to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

63. **Ms. Wang Hongbo** (China) said that the world continued to face multiple challenges, which were severely impacting the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries. China called on the international community to strengthen cooperation and support for those countries, so as to help them cope with various external challenges and shocks, and achieve sustainable development. Developed countries needed to fulfil their ODA commitments and provide stable and predictable financial support to countries in special situations. The focus needed to be placed on those countries' most urgent needs and priorities, and targeted measures should be taken to bolster their economic recovery. The United Nations development system

needed to prioritize support for countries in special situations, build international consensus and create a favourable international environment for development.

64. China supported UN-OHRLLS and its active role in the coordination and facilitation of the Doha Programme of Action and the Vienna Programme of Action. The international community needed to strengthen support for the least developed countries by establishing and improving support mechanisms, in order to enhance the latter's development capacity. Connectivity and cooperation with those countries should also be scaled up and investments should be increased in areas such as productive capacity and digital technologies, in order to help them integrate into global value chains and achieve economic transformation.

65. China had always been a firm supporter and active promoter of the revitalization and development of the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, and had always supported development efforts in the context of multilateral, bilateral and regional frameworks. Among the measures it had taken were the full implementation of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the waiving of tariffs on 98 per cent of the taxable items exported by the least developed countries having diplomatic relations with China. To accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, China proposed a global development initiative in 2021, focusing on poverty alleviation, the funding of COVID-19 recovery and climate change adaptation, and the achievement of green development, so as to meet the needs of countries in special situations. China would contribute an additional \$1 billion to global development and South-South cooperation, in order to advance the sustainable development of the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries.

66. In the lead-up to the second part of Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, China stood ready to build consensus on cooperation and jointly implement the 2030 Agenda with the international community.

67. *Mr. Al-thani (Qatar), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

68. **Ms. Rasheed** (Maldives) said that small island developing States, the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries were faced with substantial setbacks in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Millions of people were expected to slide back in to poverty and the ongoing humanitarian crisis continued to threaten most countries in special situations. Small island developing States were

confronting multiple crises and needed access to concessional financing to fully implement the 2030 Agenda, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

69. Amidst the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacts of climate change had become more severe, frequent and deadly, and climate-related disasters had almost doubled in recent decades, posing an immediate existential threat to States such as Maldives. The impact of climate change in developing countries required special measures, such as financial assistance, technology transfer and capacity-building. That requirement had been recognized for many years in the resolutions of the General Assembly and in international instruments, but the gaps between that realization and the required financing remained significant.

70. Maldives had graduated from the least developed category and was therefore very familiar with the unique challenges faced by other countries in special situations, especially those faced by countries on track for graduation. Like other developing countries, it was remote, had limited connectivity and faced logistical and other challenges owing to the small size of its population and its economic reliance on tourism. Following its graduation in 2011, Maldives continued to face numerous obstacles and it appreciated the support received from bilateral and multilateral partners to overcome those obstacles. It was crucial for the United Nations system, development partners and financial institutions to consistently support small island developing States, the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, in order to address their specific needs and vulnerabilities. There was a need for greater multilateral cooperation and partnerships, specifically with the private sector.

71. Maldives had consistently called for holistic measures of development that went beyond income per capita. Existing measures for ODA eligibility took national income into account, without considering vulnerability to climate-related threats, debt servicing burdens or the impact of geopolitical tensions. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many small island developing States had not yet fully recovered from the 2008–2009 financial crisis, and the lockdowns resulting from the health crisis had taken a devastating toll on employment and business development. During the pandemic, there was limited access to finance for fiscal measures aimed at alleviating economic challenges. For those reasons, Maldives called for a multidimensional vulnerability index in order to assess and understand the full scope of vulnerabilities in countries in special situations, as well as their economic impact. It also

urged financial institutions to remain flexible in providing concessional financing to developing countries.

72. **Ms. Babikyan** (Armenia) said that transformative recovery measures were needed to build long-term resilience in landlocked developing countries, as were coordinated actions to mobilize resources for scaling up investments and providing technical assistance, in keeping with the main priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda. Armenia underscored the importance of regional and subregional cooperation and connectivity in terms of trade, transport and people-to-people contacts, according to the principles of inclusivity, transparency, equal and non-discriminatory partnership, and respect for international law.

73. In addition to natural geographical constraints, Armenia continued to face an illegal land blockade by some of its neighbours, which restricted its access to the sea and, as such, significantly drove up the costs of imports and exports, and limited access to transit communication routes. Such policies contradicted the 2030 Agenda, since they infringed on economic and social rights, and on the right to development, and negatively affected the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

74. Armenia attached special attention to the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action. It had embarked on the renewal of its national action plan, which comprised a set of actions and measures, and set out a timetable for the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, aimed at integrating the latter's priority targets into national and regional policies and strategies, with a special focus on digital transformation and information technologies. Her Government prioritized the development of information and communications technologies as an important tool for lowering costs and facilitating access to foreign markets, so as to increase foreign trade. Armenia remained committed to effective multilateral cooperation to successfully implement the Vienna Programme of Action, advance the agenda of landlocked developing countries and formulate new measures to meet their needs and priorities.

75. **Ms. Kardash** (Russian Federation) said that, unfortunately, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the recovery of the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda were not occurring as fast as had been hoped. Since 2020, all countries had been living through turbulent times, but overcoming the current challenges had been particularly problematic for

those most vulnerable countries. The Vienna Programme of Action was unlikely to reach its goals by the deadline: as of 2021, Afghanistan, Nepal and Bhutan had not increased their GDP and most African landlocked developing countries had seen only slow growth; while a number of countries had made some progress in returning to steady growth, especially in Central Asia, landlocked developing countries continued to deal with such problems as a lack of modern and sustainable transport, energy and digital infrastructure, low production diversification and a dependence on raw materials. The new Programme of Action to be prepared shortly should continue to focus on those areas and find new solutions.

76. The Russian Federation intended to support the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action. No effort must be spared to provide the least developed countries with food, energy and financial security, to develop their education and health systems and to create favourable conditions for trade with them, including in countries graduating from the least developed country category.

77. Progress should be made in such areas as establishing a system for maintaining regional and subregional food stockpiles for the least developed countries, setting up online universities and other equivalent platforms to support higher education distance learning, strengthening early warning systems and creating regimes for investment in the least developed countries. Solutions proposed should be based on well thought out strategies for attracting financial and technical assistance, as any solution would be unviable without the necessary funds. Increasing investment in sustainable infrastructure would be the key to tackling current and future problems for both categories of countries.

78. The Russian Federation called on the United Nations and all partner to expand their cooperation with the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries with a view to ensuring equitable and just growth based on the principle of leaving no one behind. For its part, her country would continue to assistance to those countries bilaterally and through the United Nations agencies, programmes and funds.

79. **Mr. Norbu** (Bhutan) said that the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions and climate-related disasters had affected countries in special situations the most, while highlighting their significant vulnerabilities. Bhutan welcomed the adoption of the Doha Programme of Action and looked forward to taking stock of the progress made since its adoption at the second part of Fifth United Nations Conference on

the Least Developed Countries, which would provide an opportunity to encourage stronger commitments from development partners, in terms of its implementation. While the targets and actions outlined under the six focus areas of the Doha Programme of Action were relevant components for holistic growth in the least developed countries, those countries' specific features should also be taken into consideration.

80. Bhutan had implemented initiatives relating to education reform, a national digital identity project, climate resilient farming technologies and electric vehicles, in order to leverage the power of science, technology and innovation as part of efforts to combat multidimensional vulnerabilities and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In the lead-up to its graduation, it welcomed the work of the Inter-agency Task Force on Graduation of the Least Developed Countries, led by UN-OHRLLS, and the support lent to graduating countries. All United Nations entities were invited to collaborate with the Task Force, in order to develop operational guidelines for lending support to the least developed countries, and assistance to graduating countries. Despite its projected graduation, Bhutan continued to confront the challenges and constraints of being a landlocked country, including the need for accessible, affordable and reliable digital infrastructure.

81. Global economic conditions, such as stalled growth, surging inflation, rising energy and food prices, supply chain disruptions and elevated shipping and trade costs, were hampering recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in countries in special situations. Those countries bore the least responsibility for the current state of the planet, but were facing the brunt of multiple crises. In that regard, relevant programmes of action and development frameworks needed to be fully implemented, to help them get back on track towards realizing the Goals.

82. **Ms. Chanda** (Zambia) said that the continued escalation of fragilities caused by climate change and geopolitical conflicts were a cause for concern, owing to their impact on the development agenda of the least developed countries. Conflicts could adversely affect trade, especially in those countries, since they depended heavily on commodity exports, tourism and agricultural inputs such as fertilizers. As such, a strong global agenda for collaboration was needed to address the root causes of conflict, address climate change and mobilize resources, concessional financing and debt restructuring for the least developed countries.

83. Zambia called for concerted efforts to comprehensively assess the drivers of fragility, so as to

devise bold steps for addressing its causes at the source. Failing that, sub-Saharan Africa would continue to suffer the adverse impact on regional trade and markets. Her delegation urged the international community and development partners to support the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action by meeting their ODA and technical support commitments, and by facilitating public-private partnerships in critical areas, including digital capacity enhancement, human capital development and investment in agriculture, tourism and mining value chains.

84. Having met the eligibility criteria for graduation in 2021, Zambia underscored the need for continued international support for graduating countries in order to ensure a sustainable, irreversible and smooth graduation process. Landlocked developing countries faced many development challenges as a result of their lack of direct access to the sea and remained on the periphery of major markets, while high trade costs hindered their economic transformation. Continued collaboration with transit countries was more critical than ever, as was international support for increased investment in quality and sustainable transport infrastructure, the development of cross-border trade facilitation infrastructure, the streamlining of customs procedures and the reduction of transit times at borders. Regional integration initiatives needed to be bolstered by investment in transport corridors connecting inland and seaports, and by public-private partnerships for cost-effective rail infrastructure, since the full development of the transport sector was a key condition for the stable economic development of landlocked developing countries.

85. **Mr. Nunes** (Timor-Leste) said that the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, war and political tensions had worsened inequalities within and between countries, and had undermined the progress made by the least developed countries towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Global crises had exacerbated structural vulnerabilities in the least developed countries and small island developing States in terms of food insecurity, energy scarcity, poverty and the difficult implementation of socioeconomic and digital transformation, resulting in lower educational attainments and productive capacities. Recovery from the impact of the crises was essential for driving economic growth and facilitating sustainable development.

86. The Doha Programme of Action reflected a new hope for progress in the least developed countries, given that its successful implementation would address their structural vulnerabilities and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, while strengthening their

resilience to future shocks. Its key priority areas remained critical, as those countries sought to accelerate economic and social transformation, and achieve the Goals. International solidarity and partnerships were needed to find innovative ways and means of achieving the Goals, addressing the impact of climate change and moving towards irreversible graduation.

87. Timor-Leste had integrated the Doha Programme of Action into its national planning framework in order to build institutional capacities and enhance service delivery; improve good governance, transparency, the rule of law and public service efficiency; accelerate vaccination and relax containment measures; improve productive capacity, so as to support structural transformation; develop mechanisms for economic diversification in the agricultural, fisheries, tourism and manufacturing sectors; and promote private sector engagement in national efforts to develop key sectors, achieve economic diversification and alleviate structural constraints.

88. Timor-Leste considered investing in education and productive capacity skills to be a key element of its development strategy for reducing poverty and creating a more productive and healthy society. Progress had been made in addressing malnutrition, reducing maternal mortality rates, improving health care services, increasing access to education and promoting gender equality. However, Timor-Leste continued to face challenges and, like all of the least developed countries, needed greater international support for investment in science, technology and innovation.

89. **Mr. Davies** (South Africa) said that the current food, fuel and finance crises were exacerbating the devastating health and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. In addition to being the hardest hit by the climate crisis, those vulnerable countries were grappling with health challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, and less than 20 per cent of their total population was vaccinated, compared with 73 per cent in developed countries. That injustice needed to be urgently corrected by closing the \$16 billion financing gap for the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator in order to save lives and expand access to diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines in developing countries. There was also need for continued review of intellectual property regimes that were impeding global health collaborations, and the accelerated discovery and development of technologies.

90. The socioeconomic impact of the pandemic had pushed an estimated 150 million people into poverty

worldwide, with 32 million people plunged into absolute poverty in the least developed countries. Countries in special situations were experiencing widespread unemployment and income losses, as well as significant declines in exports and remittances, and a sharp decline in GDP growth rates. The economic recovery that had begun in 2021 was slowing, and those countries would take many more years than developed countries to return to pre-pandemic GDP levels. Given their high debt burdens and low growth prospects, realizing the Sustainable Development Goals would be impossible for most of the least developed countries. Additional financial resources needed to be urgently mobilized for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and to provide those countries with relief from their crippling debts.

91. South Africa urged developed countries to honour their ODA commitments, which represented a lifeline for many developing countries, and called for a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, under the World Trade Organization, to address the needs of countries in special situations. Skills and technology transfers to those countries were critical, as were investments in infrastructure development, science and technology, so as to close the digital divide. The food insecurity challenges faced by vulnerable countries required enhanced support, to respond to short-term emergencies and long-term structural constraints. Those challenges were compounded in landlocked developing countries, which faced the additional obstacles of lacking direct access to the sea, remoteness from global markets, and dependence on other countries for international trade and transit.

92. The climate crisis was costing African economies between 3 per cent and 5 per cent of GDP, and it was predicted to worsen, leaving millions of people, particularly in the least developed countries, in situations of acute water and food insecurity. A just climate deal was urgently needed to enable all developing countries to make a transition to a more sustainable future. Those countries needed between \$5 trillion and \$11 trillion to meet their climate objectives, but developed countries had not yet fulfilled their commitment to provide \$100 billion each year. South Africa looked forward to progress in that regard, and called for urgent assistance for the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action and the Vienna Programme of Action.

93. **Mr. Uslu** (Türkiye) said that current challenges were disproportionately jeopardizing the development prospects of the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, and posed a threat to

the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Doha Programme of Action was a new blueprint for supporting the least developed countries over the following decade, through its concrete deliverables such as the food stockholding initiative and graduation support facilities.

94. Food security was a major concern and measures should be adopted to address both short-term and long-term constraints, in order to enable the least developed countries to eradicate hunger and gain access to sufficient and nutritious food. Türkiye had facilitated the Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports to help respond to food insecurity challenges in the least developed countries. Those countries were a development priority for Türkiye, and, as Co-Chair of the Group of Friends of the Least Developed Countries, it would focus on means of implementation for the Doha Programme of Action. Since 2018, Türkiye had been hosting the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries, which needed increased attention and support to fulfil its objective of helping those countries achieve structural transformation. Landlocked developing countries that also fell into the category of least developed countries were invited to benefit from the services of the Bank, since they faced additional developmental challenges.

95. In that connection, accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action was critical to help landlocked developing countries recover from the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries would provide an opportunity for reviewing the progress already made and scaling up international efforts. Türkiye would continue to support landlocked developing countries in their pursuit of development and better connectivity.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.