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

Contents

Agenda item 8: Coordination segment (continued)

Panel discussion: “Conversation among the executive secretaries of United Nations regional commissions: regional perspectives for an inclusive and resilient recovery guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

Panel discussion: “Reflections on the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council”

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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 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 8: Coordination segment (continued)

Panel discussion: “Conversation among the executive secretaries of United Nations regional commissions: regional perspectives for an inclusive and resilient recovery guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

1. **Ms. Alisjahbana** (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)), panellist, said that States would showcase high-impact initiatives to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and discuss gaps and challenges at the tenth session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. The Global Ocean Accounts Partnership, co-chaired by ESCAP, had been established to enable States and other stakeholders to move beyond gross domestic product (GDP) to measure and manage progress in the sustainable development of the ocean.

2. With regard to building more inclusive societies, the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032 provided concrete entry points to promote inclusive development and build resilience for persons with disabilities. ESCAP also provided support to its member States to improve social protection systems, in line with the Action Plan to Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific. In terms of building more resilient economies, ESCAP was working with States to implement the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific to improve the efficiency and climate-smart nature of commerce. The Commission was building resilience in value chains, trade and digital connectivity to better prepare the region for future crises.

3. To achieve a more sustainable environment, ESCAP was helping States to decarbonize their economies by fast-tracking and sustaining energy transitions and developing national road maps for Sustainable Development Goal 7. The Commission was also focusing on accelerating digitalization and leveraging financing in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With a view to bridging the digital divide across and within countries, the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative provided support to States to turn the gap into a digital dividend, such as through the promotion of subregional Internet exchange points. In 2023, initiatives would continue to

focus on inclusive financing instruments, such as debt-for-climate adaptation swaps in the Pacific and green bonds in the least developed countries. In 2022, at the seventy-eighth session of the Commission, its member States had adopted a common agenda to advance sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific, which included protecting people and the planet, leveraging digital opportunities, increasing regional trade and investments, aligning financial resources with the Goals and managing debt.

4. **Mr. Pedro** (Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)), panellist, said that Africa continued to be disproportionately impacted by the ongoing war in Ukraine, the climate crisis and worsening international financial conditions. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had led to the largest drop in the continent’s growth rate since the Second World War and had pushed over 55 million Africans into extreme poverty. The war in Europe was contributing to double-digit inflation in nearly half of African countries. Food insecurity and rising energy costs increasingly threatened peace and stability. Government budgets were stretched, debt stocks and debt servicing costs were rising and market access for new finance was severely constrained. As a result, there had been a reversal of much of the progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

5. Nevertheless, an inclusive and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic was possible. The economic recovery must be based on green principles and a just energy transition to provide access to electricity for the 586 million people who lacked access. Strategic value chains, including for batteries, electric vehicles and renewable energy, should be relocated to the continent. In addition, a new social contract that aligned with the Secretary-General’s report entitled “Our Common Agenda” was needed. It would require decent jobs, social protection, equality and inclusion. Human capacity development must also be broadened to ensure that training and vocational education provided Africa’s youth with the requisite skill set for the labour market. The smart operationalization of local policies and development programmes for national suppliers could accelerate the emergence of globally competitive small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Africa.

6. At the national level, there was a need for fiscal reforms and coherent and effective frameworks to mobilize domestic revenue. In addition, public expenditure should be invested in more growth-enhancing projects. At the same time, the international community should work towards reforming the global financial architecture, since high debt-servicing costs

prevented Governments from funding basic services. In Africa, nine countries were already in debt distress and an additional 13 were at high risk. The Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative should be reformed to provide a more effective process for multilateral debt restructuring. The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development would provide a critical opportunity to review the progress made and reflect on strategies to accelerate action and advance transformative solutions to reach the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

7. **Ms. Algayerova** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)), panellist, said that the sixty-ninth session of ECE had focused on the circular economy, and the forthcoming seventieth session would take stock of the region's progress. Only 8.6 per cent of the global economy was circular. Energy decarbonization and urban development had been identified as entry points for the region, which required integrated thinking on transport, housing, infrastructure and innovative partnerships. The region was suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, inflation and multiple economic and environmental crises, which emphasized the need to build resilient energy systems and move towards a net-zero future. A number of United Nations frameworks could provide guidance in achieving those goals. The Commission's environmental performance review programme analysed a large number of economic sectors with environmental implications and provided recommendations. To broaden cooperation, ECE aimed to involve more actors, including local authorities. For example, it held an annual Forum of Mayors and conducted voluntary local reviews. With regard to private sector engagement, the textile industry participated in the sustainability pledge initiative.

8. The international community must accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and take advantage of existing synergies among the Sustainable Development Goals. It must work together across sectors, which required and the engagement of all Governments and United Nations entities. Long-term considerations must be taken into account in establishing scenarios for future development.

9. **Mr. García-Buchaca** (Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)), panellist, said that the fight against inflation had tightened global financial conditions, increased volatility in financial markets and augmented risk aversion, which had driven up the cost of debt servicing and further reduced fiscal space. ECLAC projected a mere 1.3 per cent growth in

Latin America and the Caribbean in 2023. Against that backdrop, ECLAC member States were urged to redouble efforts to stimulate their economies and transform development models.

10. At the thirty-ninth session of ECLAC in October 2022, a position document had been presented that identified strategic sectors for advancing sustainable development, promoting investment and growth and contributing to the region's inclusive recovery. It focused on green energy transition, electromobility, cross-sectoral circular economy strategies, sustainable agriculture and bioeconomy, the health-care manufacturing industry, digital transformation, the care economy, sustainable tourism, SMEs, and the social and solidarity economy. For example, the ongoing conflict in Europe had underscored the urgent need to transition to renewable energy. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean could leverage their natural resources to promote the transition to renewable energy sources and strengthen their capacities in energy storage technologies, battery production and electromobility.

11. Additional investments were needed to provide universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation. In 2023, ECLAC would convene a regional dialogue on water in Santiago and would launch a regional action agenda on water. With regard to health care, ECLAC provided support for the implementation of the plan for self-sufficiency on health matters, at the request of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. An innovative financing for development agenda was also a key priority. ECLAC had been working closely with Member States to analyse the impacts of losing eligibility for official development assistance, to promote the use of other criteria for measuring development beyond GDP per capita and to explore alternative cooperation mechanisms for green and inclusive production. With regard to global taxation, ECLAC fully supported the initiative put forth by Colombia to create a Latin America and Caribbean summit for inclusive, sustainable and equitable global taxation, to serve as a permanent tax decision-making body in the region. The first summit would take place in Cartagena, Colombia in July 2023.

12. ECLAC had called for renewed cooperation with the region's middle-income countries and small island developing States. Work had been undertaken to promote the development in economies in transition, in partnership with the European Union and the Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, to rethink international development cooperation modalities for the region's middle-income countries, many of which were not eligible for concessional financing. Those

recommendations would be assessed at the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development in April 2023. The analysis and recommendations for accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals would then be shared at the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July 2023 and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in September 2023.

13. **Ms. Dashti** (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine had been felt deeply in the Arab region. Although progress on the Sustainable Development Goals had slowed, advances continued to be made in neonatal and under-five mortality rates, the number of parliamentary seats held by women, the closing of the gender gap in education and access to Internet services, electricity, clean energy, clean water and sanitation services. Nevertheless, serious challenges remained. Public debt was growing faster than GDP. Fiscal space continued to shrink, while the demand for quality social services and the expansion of social protection systems continued to grow. Inequality was on the rise, and the region's unemployment rate was the highest in the world, particularly for women and youth. In addition, 90 per cent of people lived in water-scarce countries.

14. ESCWA was working on multiple fronts to address those challenges. Its Social Expenditure Monitor was an interactive policy tool to help countries and United Nations country teams to understand the dynamics of social spending and the measures needed to improve efficiency and impact. The Commission was convening an Arab debt management group to support Governments in optimizing borrowing strategies. Debt swap initiatives were supported to accelerate progress on the Goals and finance climate action. The Commission encouraged integrated water management and provided resources for climate adaptation and mitigation. It also promoted discussion on inequality, targeted support to SMEs and innovative solutions, including new projects in regional creative industries and digitalization.

Panel discussion: "Reflections on the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council"

15. **Ms. Fukuda-Parr** (Vice-Chair of the Committee for Development Policy), panellist, said that the role of her Committee was to provide independent advice to the Council on development policy issues. Through its analysis of the voluntary national reviews, the Committee had found a clear disconnect between the

transformative ambition of the 2030 Agenda and implementation efforts at the national level. Although an increasing number of States were establishing interdepartmental coordination frameworks to implement the 2030 Agenda, implementation strategies generally did not reflect an integrated approach and remained silos and fragmented. In addition, strategies to leave no one behind were often limited in scope and focused on providing support to vulnerable groups through social protection measures rather than addressing the root causes of inequalities and exclusion. Vulnerable groups were being pushed even further behind as inequalities and marginalization continued to be perpetuated and reproduced.

16. The Committee had advocated for the use of evidence-based industrial policies to strengthen productive capacity in developing countries and build forward from the COVID-19 pandemic. Such policies would help to address the climate crisis and growing inequalities and to overcome low- and middle-income traps. They must include timelines, regular evaluation and accountability mechanisms to avoid being dominated by special interests. SMEs were essential to generating employment and innovation; however, the absence of better mechanisms to help channel globally available capital and know-how to support them was holding back progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

17. Although the 2030 Agenda included strong goals for poverty eradication and ecosystem conservation, Goals 10 and 16 on inequalities and participatory governance were insufficient. The Committee had called for inclusive multilateralism and a transparent process to identify and implement the changes needed to ensure that the system supported equitable, sustainable and resilient development through structural transformation. The five Geneva principles for a global green new deal could serve as a guideline in that regard.

18. **Mr. Abdel-Moneim** (Chair of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), panellist, speaking via video link, said that his Committee was the only human rights treaty body that was a subsidiary body of the Council. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had incorporated most of same priorities of the Sustainable Development Goals long before their existence.

19. Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda could not be achieved while the international economic and financial situation remained uncontrollable. Inflation and recession were no less harmful than COVID-19. The misallocation of global resources also threatened to

undermine progress. Fortunately, the international community had the resources and solutions necessary to address those challenges; it needed only the political will to apply them for the benefit of all humanity.

20. **Mr. Mejía Montalvo** (Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues), panellist, said that, in order to demonstrate a basic respect for diversity and the commitments made by States and United Nations entities, it was important to call Indigenous Peoples by their names and not confuse them with other rights holders or include them in other categories, such as vulnerable groups. Such recognition was essential to measuring progress and determining what remained to be done. In that connection, specific and relevant data should be collected for monitoring and decision-making purposes.

21. It was also important to recognize comprehensive Indigenous knowledge systems to effectively address global challenges related to climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, food security and sovereignty, the right to food, energy transition, technological advances, ecosystem restoration, ocean sciences and water resources. Coordinated action was necessary to ensure that solutions for protecting the environment and the transition to renewable energy did not victimize Indigenous Peoples. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in development must respect and recognize Indigenous Peoples and their territories.

22. The Permanent Forum, which included a segment dedicated to implementing the 2030 Agenda, had repeatedly called on States to create space for the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in intergovernmental processes, particularly in voluntary national reviews. He invited all Member States to attend the twenty-second session of the Permanent Forum, to be held in April 2023, which would focus on a rights-based approach to human, planetary and territorial health and climate change.

23. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Chair of the Commission for Social Development), panellist, said that her Commission had established a multi-stakeholder forum during its annual sessions to improve cooperation with other stakeholders, including development partners and civil society. The forum focused on the Commission's priority themes and on finding solutions that development partners could share with Member States. Previous examples included the connection between sustainable livelihoods and the eradication of hunger and poverty, as well as the relationship between digital technology and social development.

24. Given the integrated nature of social and economic policies, the Commission urged Member States to

address the multiple causes of poverty, hunger and inequality. It also encouraged them to strengthen social protection systems, ensuring that they were gender responsive and family oriented, with a view to addressing the specific needs and priorities of the most vulnerable groups. Examples of policy actions included targeted cash transfers for individuals and families in vulnerable conditions, such as single-parent households, particularly those headed by women. Other action areas included providing quality education and health care; creating decent work; increasing resilience; improving coherence between social protection, food security and nutrition policies; promoting digital and financial literacy; and empowering women and girls.

25. The priority theme of the forthcoming sixty-fourth session of the Commission would focus on creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the COVID-19 pandemic recovery and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Commission also sought to address the social impacts of multifaceted crises and examine the social and economic responses as part of its contribution to the high-level political forum. Furthermore, the forthcoming session would provide an opportunity to discuss successful policies and strategies for creating more inclusive, equitable and adaptable labour markets at the national, regional and global levels. Discussions would also focus on policies that sought to create employment and decent work in new, sustainable and growing sectors to overcome inequality.

26. **Mr. Leucă** (Chair of the Commission on Population and Development), panellist, said that the work of his Commission cut across many topics and had close links to the work of other subsidiary bodies. For example, the *World Social Report 2023*, published by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, documented the multifaceted impacts of population ageing on economies, labour markets, poverty, inequality and exclusion. When the global population had reached 8 billion on 15 November 2022, the United Nations had highlighted the challenges that rapid population growth posed to achieving sustainable development in low-income countries and the least developed countries. It had also emphasized that population growth was already slow or declining in the countries with the highest level of consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

27. The theme of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission would focus on population, education and sustainable development, allowing the Commission to build on the outcomes of the Transforming Education Summit, which included developing curricula that

protected rights and allowed learners to lead healthy lives, advancing gender equality and girls and women's empowerment, harnessing the digital revolution to benefit public education and investing in education. He hoped that many of those elements would be incorporated in the Commission's resolution, which could provide helpful input to the forthcoming high-level political forum and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit.

28. **Mr. Singhal** (Chair of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the Working Group assisted countries with the implementation of best practices in accounting and reporting to foster financial stability, international and domestic investment, and social and economic progress. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) served as its secretariat, providing substantive and administrative input. The Working Group also assisted countries in strengthening their national sustainability reporting infrastructure to implement international changes and promote sustainable finance and development by sharing lessons learned and best practices. It had created new regional partnerships to promote sustainability reporting in Africa and Latin America and was working to launch a partnership in Asia. The UNCTAD report *Guidance on Core Indicators for Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goal Impact Reporting (UNCTAD/DIAE/2022/1)* measured progress on economic, environmental and social aspects related to Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7 and 9. The Working Group collaborated with the Financing for Sustainable Development Office and departments of statistics in several United Nations entities.

29. At its thirty-ninth session, the Group had called on UNCTAD to support capacity-building to strengthen sustainability reporting infrastructures; to promote accounting and reporting for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and their role in facilitating the formalization of businesses; and to undertake research on gender equality in the accountancy profession.

30. **Mr. Pedroso Cuesta** (Observer for Cuba), speaking on behalf of Group of 77 and China, said that the Council played an essential role in guiding its subsidiary bodies towards coherent and coordinated action to better support all States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The Council and its subsidiary bodies and regional commissions could make a significant contribution to the following objectives: ensuring universal access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments and building strong health-care systems for an inclusive and resilient recovery from the pandemic;

reforming the global financial architecture to provide greater access to concessional financing for developing countries and end illicit financial flows; investing in sustainable and resilient infrastructure; taking urgent action on climate change and biodiversity loss; and promoting technology transfer, capacity-building and scientific and technological cooperation between developed and developing countries to promote sustainable development. In that connection, the review of Goals 6, 7, 9 and 11 at the high-level political forum in 2023 would provide an opportunity to raise expectations. The forthcoming regional forums on sustainable development would also provide an opportunity to evaluate progress and propose political solutions in line with national and regional priorities. Discussions should focus on identifying shortcomings and challenges that required urgent attention.

31. The forum on financing for development follow-up, including the annual meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, provided an opportunity to address the financial needs of developing countries. Discussions should focus on reducing financing gaps and ensure that developing countries played a bigger role in economic decision-making processes. Through the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, the Council could discuss ways to strengthen international tax cooperation, including by addressing tax avoidance and evasion. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development should further examine the ways in which the global digital compact could promote development, such as reducing the digital divide, improving multilateral digital cooperation and strengthening the role of digital technologies to facilitate and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The forthcoming meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum would serve as a platform to identify priority areas to strengthen cooperation, such as reversing the decline in flexible and predictable resources for operational activities for development.

32. Lastly, the Group encouraged the Council to highlight the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions throughout its work and that of its subsidiary bodies.

33. **Mr. Meschchanov** (Observer for the Russian Federation) said that, given the current multidimensional crisis and weak state of multilateralism, new types of partnerships at the subnational and regional levels could provide the necessary impetus for cooperation. In that regard, the potential of regional economic agreements was underutilized. Since the Russian Federation would hold the presidency of the Eurasian Economic Union in 2023, his delegation wished to know how United Nations organizations, particularly the regional

economic commissions, could improve cooperation with other regional organizations.

34. ESCAP played an important role in facilitating cooperation with States in the Asia-Pacific region. Despite many challenges, such efforts were making progress on resolving pressing issues and were based on the principles of unity, solidarity and multilateralism, as enshrined in ESCAP resolution 78/1, adopted at the end of the seventy-eighth session of the Commission in May 2022. At the same time, his delegation was disappointed that some Member States were politicizing cooperation in the Economic Commission for Europe, which negatively impacted economic ties and collaboration in the region. As a result, beneficiaries of a number of joint projects were suffering. It also affected the Commission's effectiveness and called into question its future.

35. With regard to the comments made by the Acting Executive Secretary of ECA, given the food and energy crisis, his Government had offered to provide certain free supplies of food and fertilizer to the poorest countries in Africa. To date, those supplies had not reached their beneficiaries, through no fault of his Government, which would continue supporting friendly countries on the African continent.

36. Lastly, he asked the representative of ECLAC representative how sustainable development in the region would be impacted by the introduction of the common currency proposed by some States.

37. **Mr. Pedro** (Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)), panellist, said that collaboration with regional bodies was important. To that end, the Secretary-General had met with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in December 2022 to review the state of cooperation between their organizations on the peace and security and development pillars. The African Union had called for greater support to enable African States to take the lead in pursuing growth and development on the continent. ECA worked closely with the African Union to support climate action and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. The latter played a crucial role in Africa's recovery, given its market of over 1 billion people. At the same time, ECA looked to the international community to support Africa's quest for food security and sustainable development.

38. **Mr. García-Buchaca** (Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)), panellist, said that Brazil and Argentina had announced an initiative to develop a common currency to facilitate trade between their countries, which were the pillars of the Southern

Common Market. It had been proposed as a response to the scarcity of foreign currency in the trade between them. ECLAC was working to provide a full assessment of the initiative's feasibility and implications.

39. **Ms. Hamdouni** (Observer for Morocco) said that middle-income countries represented 75 per cent of the world's population and 33 per cent of the world's GDP, but they also represented 62 per cent of the world's poor. They continued to contend with a lack of access to concessional financing, primarily owing to the limitations of the GDP per capita criterion, which burdened national efforts to achieve sustainable development. Having chaired the Like-Minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, Morocco supported enhancing complementarity and sharing experiences. In that connection, she asked what measures the regional economic commissions could implement to support peer learning among middle-income countries across regions. She also wondered how their expertise could be employed to identify new measurements and indicators that went beyond the GDP per capita criterion to inform access to finance, capacity-building and technical cooperation.

40. **Mr. Zhang** Wenjian (Observer for the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)) said that WMO continued to strengthen its collaboration with United Nations regional bodies. In the past three years, the regional economic commissions had contributed significantly to WMO regional climate reports on aspects related to the socioeconomic impact of climate change.

41. **Ms. Algayerova** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)), panellist, said that peer learning was at the centre of all work carried out by the regional economic commissions, since they provided a platform for Member States and experts to collaborate. For example, ECE had 144 expert intergovernmental bodies in which participants exchanged experiences on specific areas, such as transport, environment, energy, housing and forests. ECE had collaborated with WMO to draft the report entitled *The State of the Climate in Europe 2021*, contributing to the sections on water, energy and the impacts of climate change. In addition, the Issue-based Coalition on Environment and Climate Change provided a regional platform in which 17 United Nations entities worked together to strengthen governance.

42. **Ms. Alisjhabana** (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)), panellist, said that ESCAP supported peer learning within the Asia-Pacific region, but also among countries across regions. Along with the

Government of Thailand and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, the Commission had co-hosted the Global South-South Development Expo in 2022. The event had showcased initiatives on taking climate action and sharing best practices. With regard to multilateral cooperation, ESCAP had established regional economic cooperation agreements related to trade and transport connectivity. Those agreements were supported by States and contributed to improving sustainability, inclusiveness and resiliency, particularly in the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries.

43. **Mr. Pedro** (Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)) said that the regional collaborative platforms were successfully increasing vertical and horizontal integration within the United Nations system. For example, through the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa, ECA had collaborated with WMO on determining the content for the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In addition, the middle-income trap was a serious issue that could not be address without peer learning, particularly with regard to industrial policy, scientific knowledge and innovations.

44. **Mr. García-Buchaca** (Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)) said that peer learning was critical, particularly for middle-income countries and countries in special situations, such as small island developing States in the Caribbean. In that connection, ECLAC had established a community of practice on voluntary national reviews for Latin American and Caribbean countries. Peer learning also took place in the subsidiary bodies of ECLAC, such as the Statistical Conference of the Americas, as well as other regional conferences in which ECLAC participated, such as those on South-South cooperation and women.

45. **Mr. Vinito** (India) said that his delegation underscored the importance of the working methods of the subsidiary bodies of the Council, which had specific mandates and established practices. The intergovernmental nature of the bodies' decisions must be upheld. His delegation also attached great importance to the work of civil society in furthering the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting human rights. It supported the inclusion of civil society in the work of United Nations, including that of the subsidiary bodies. Nevertheless, there was an urgent need for transparency and scrutiny in the accreditation process for non-governmental organizations and other groups, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Council.

The subsidiary bodies must uphold the basic rights of Member States to express their views, along with the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

46. **Ms. Fraser-Moleketi** (Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration), panellist, said that siloed institutions posed a number of challenges. Sustainable Development Goal 16 spoke to the importance of building and strengthening public institutions as a whole, not merely in the areas of peace and justice. As had been noted, institution-building and policy frameworks were missing in that regard. A different approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was therefore needed to achieve the impact and scale required. Policy coherence was also essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The international community should reflect on whether it had the political will necessary to achieve the Goals within the time frame and who would be responsible for deciding which Goals to prioritize.

47. **Ms. Fukuda-Parr** (Vice-Chair of the Committee for Development Policy) said that Sustainable Development Goal 16 targeted the institutional infrastructure needed for good management in order to promote peaceful and inclusive societies. Given the concept's breadth, it had been difficult to include all the necessary elements. For example, the indicators related to access to justice focused primarily on reporting, which could only be accurate when some access to justice existed. Goal 16 also reflected the need to focus more on the root causes of inequalities, exclusion and unsustainability. A new approach was needed to address the impacts of the various global crises and the reversal of progress made on the Goals. In that regard, the voluntary national reviews should be used more effectively to promote peer learning and address strategic obstacles created by vested interests.

48. **Mr. Maniratanga** (Chair of the United Nations Forum on Forests), panellist, speaking in a pre-recorded video message, said that, in its seventeenth session in May 2022, the Forum had adopted an omnibus resolution, which contained provisions to advance the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and accelerate the achievement of its global forest goals. The Forum had also agreed on a comprehensive list of actions to be taken in preparation for the midterm review of the international arrangement on forests. As part of the review process, the Forum also sought to promote synergy and coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals and global efforts to combat climate change and biodiversity loss. In preparation for the forthcoming Sustainable

Development Goals Summit, the Bureau of the eighteenth session of the Forum would hold a one-day event in April 2023 to showcase the important contributions of forests and their sustainable management to energy, livelihoods and the Goals.

49. **Mr. Pfund** (Chair of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals), panellist, said that many dangerous goods were essential to daily life. As such, they were subject to globally harmonized provisions governing safe management throughout their lifecycle. The Committee of Experts endeavoured to provide Governments, companies, workers and consumers with consistent and appropriate information on such goods, with a view to keeping people safe, reducing environmental contamination, encouraging innovations in affordable and clean energy alternatives and promoting equitable economic opportunities for all countries. Its recommendations were implemented at the national, regional and international levels through legal instruments governing the transport of dangerous goods and workplace and consumer protection from exposure to hazardous chemicals. Its recommendations also played a key role in ensuring the safe and seamless transport of supplies to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with regard to the global multimodal transport of gases for medical care and vaccines, including those requiring temperature control and cargo monitoring and tracking devices. To continue to enhance its work on the sound management of chemicals, the Committee of Experts had incorporated the 2030 Agenda as a standing agenda item for the upcoming biennium.

50. Although there was an existing framework for the responsible management of critical materials, the Council could encourage greater participation in less represented regions, which would allow the Committee of Experts to develop truly transformative and science-based policies. The Council could also encourage more consistent implementation of the Committee's recommendations in national legislation in order to promote health for all and facilitate the recovery of global supply chains.

51. **Ms. Fraser-Moleketi** (Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration) said that the African Union and its member States had shown great interest in the 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development, developed by her Committee, which served as a guide to strengthening institutions and policymakers' capacity to design and implement inclusive sustainable development policies. Efforts were being made to ensure that the principles were applied

and integrated into national development plans and that the available tools were used appropriately to support effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness at the institutional level. In that connection, the ongoing partnership between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the African Peer Review Mechanism had yielded satisfactory results. In addition, the Committee engaged actively with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on policy coherence for sustainable development, multilevel governance and the examination of public administration challenges at the subnational level.

52. Despite multiple challenges, public administration and institutions played an important role in developing integrated approaches to long-term development objectives in countries emerging from conflict, particularly with regard to balancing short-term needs for security with the longer-term requirements of sustainable development. Through informal contributions to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Committee helped to identify the potential impact of specific governance improvements in conflict-affected settings based on the principles' practical application. A series of strategy guidance notes, commissioned by the Secretariat, examined the many facets of effective governance for sustainable development. They were used by the African Peer Review Mechanism to guide and shape targeted support to countries in building strong institutions to implement the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

53. The Committee encouraged stakeholders of voluntary national and local reviews to reflect on the use of the principles. A study commissioned by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs had found that several of the principles were addressed in voluntary national reviews; however, coverage was uneven and there was a lack of either qualitative or quantitative indicators. Governance indicators should be sufficiently detailed to assess the quality of a Government's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

54. **Ms. Joyini** (Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women), panellist, said that the priority theme of her Commission was innovation and technological change and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The integration of a gender perspective in technology and innovation was crucial to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. At the 25-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Governments had recognized the gender gaps in access to opportunities provided by technology and had stressed the need to ensure that funding for

technological development and innovation advanced gender equality.

55. At its sixty-seventh session, the Commission would examine digitalization, with the aim of providing concrete, action-oriented policy recommendations. Digital technologies allowed for unprecedented advances to improve social and economic outcomes for women and girls but could also give rise to profound new challenges that might perpetrate and deepen existing patterns of gender inequalities. In its agreed conclusions from previous sessions, the Commission had provided recommendations to address climate change and disaster risk reduction, the exclusion of girls from education, the growing prevalence of violence against women and girls in digital contexts and the lack of preventive measures and remedies.

56. **Ms. Mugwanja** (Chair of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice), panellist, speaking in a pre-recorded video message, said that her Commission supported Member States in preventing and countering crime, corruption and terrorism. It sought to promote the rule of law and improve the effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness of criminal justice systems. The Commission would continue to assess progress on Sustainable Development Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies in preparation for the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in 2023. The COVID-19 pandemic had created new opportunities for crime and weakened criminal justice institutions. Mindful of the need to accelerate the pandemic recovery, the Commission held annual thematic discussions to ensure access to justice for all and implement the commitments laid out in the Kyoto Declaration on Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law: Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

57. **Mr. Ruiz Blanco** (Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs), panellist, speaking in a pre-recorded video message, said that the COVID-19 pandemic had had devastating effects on efforts to address the world drug problem, with the emergence of new forms of drug trafficking, an increase in drug use disorders and a decrease in access to effective treatment and controlled medicines. Those challenges impeded the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health and Goal 16 on peaceful societies. Coordinated multidisciplinary efforts were needed to support recovery and ensure that no one was left behind. In 2024, the Commission would conduct a midterm review of the progress made in implementing all international drug policy commitments. In preparation, it would continue to foster the exchange of lessons learned during its annual thematic discussions and regional meetings with drug

law enforcement agencies. He hoped that the world drug problem would be considered during the forthcoming high-level political forum and reflected in its ministerial declaration.

58. **Ms. Mendoza Elguea** (Mexico) said that the impact of the ongoing interconnected crises was most harmful to people in vulnerable situations. The global response must therefore be comprehensive and address issues related to social exclusion, food security, health, gender inequality, the education gap and climate change. It should also promote harmonious people-centred strategies. To achieve real progress, the United Nations system must be effective and focus on coordination, coherence and synergies. That vision should also govern individual and collective efforts undertaken by subsidiary bodies, commissions, specialized agencies and intergovernmental processes. Technological innovation and scientific advances were essential tools for the effective use of resources, given their limited availability. A sustainable recovery was possible only by leaving no one behind and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It required comprehensive, coherent and coordinated multilateralism and could not rely solely on governmental action. In that connection, it was essential to promote the full and meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders, including civil society, women, youth, academia and the private sector.

59. **Mr. Lages** (Portugal) said that, in his report entitled “Our Common Agenda”, the Secretary-General had made a clear call to move beyond GDP as a metric of development. He wished to know how the regional commissions and subsidiary bodies were contributing to developing alternatives metrics that could encompass sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions, particularly with regard to the ongoing process to finalize the multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States.

60. **Mr. Meschchanov** (Observer for the Russian Federation) said that, despite the COVID-19 restrictions and hybrid formats governing the meetings of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna, it was important to ensure that the principle of multilateralism was fully upheld.

61. **Mr. Mejía Montalvo** (Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues) said that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals required the use of appropriate language to recognize all rights holders. Although progress had been made at the international level, it should also be reflected in actions at the national level. To that end, there must be disaggregated data on the condition of rights holders, including their efforts to address urgent needs. For example, Indigenous Peoples

made up only 6.2 per cent of the global population; however, they protected at least 80 per cent of the biodiversity living on approximately 18 per cent of the planet's surface. That contribution should be acknowledged by recognizing their ownership and rights through both international commitments and declarations and national action. The international community must also be humble enough to recognize that the proposed solutions often produced inadequate results in terms of reducing inequalities and preserving life on the planet.

62. When determining how to strengthen institutions, diverse knowledge systems and perspectives should be recognized. He acknowledged the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in that regard and encouraged all Member States to implement its General Recommendation No. 39 (2022) on the rights of Indigenous women and girls, which had been proposed by the Permanent Forum. He wondered whether it was possible to institutionalize the coordination segment of the Council to support more collaborative work.

63. **Mr. García-Buchaca** (Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)) said that the inclusion of diverse stakeholders was at the heart of efforts to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national and regional levels. All of civil society must be included, particularly young people, who would play a leading role in current and future efforts. All United Nations bodies provided specific opportunities to facilitate the participation of civil society in dialogues, such as panels during all major events.

64. With regard to the call to move beyond the GDP metric, ECLAC was contributing to the development of the multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States and focusing on the perspective of States in the Caribbean, which faced particular challenges in terms of financing for development and climate vulnerability.

65. **Ms. Merodio Gómez** (Co-Chair of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management), panellist, said that, with regard to the development of an alternative to the GDP metric, her Committee had contributed to the use of other sources of information for monitoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, the Goals geospatial road map adopted by the Statistical Commission in 2022 recognized geospatial information as official data for global indicators.

66. **Mr. Pedro** (Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)) said that spatial planning and geographic information systems could help to localize poverty and target action. As a number of African countries pursued decentralization, those tools could identify existing human, social and physical assets to ensure that resources were transferred to areas in need.

67. In February 2023, ECA would host an African business forum on the development of carbon credit markets, which would showcase projects that focused on increasing the value proposition of conservation. When local communities earned dividends from such efforts, they became agents of conservation. ECA would be deploying carbon credit markets in the Congo basin. If each ton of sequestered carbon could be sold for \$120, the area would generate \$82 billion a year. That money could then be used for sustainable livelihood projects to help reduce poverty.

68. **Ms. Merodio Gómez** (Co-Chair of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management) said that geospatial information was crucial to accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, as it contributed to identifying target areas and making risk-informed decisions. For example, the COVID-19 map had provided information about the spread of the disease and the distribution of vaccines. Geospatial information was also essential to monitoring climate action and biodiversity loss. The Committee of Experts worked closely with United Nations regional entities across the subsidiary bodies of the Council to promote coherence in the use of geospatial information and to bridge the geospatial digital divide for a more sustainable and resilient future.

69. **Mr. Jaillard** (Chair of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names), panellist, speaking in a pre-recorded video message, said that the Group was working with the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management on an initiative to support national geographic institutes and authorities in standardizing national place names, in line with the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework. The initiative would highlight good practices and provide some funding. The Group would continue to create and strengthen relations with United Nations bodies and international organizations. Its next session would be held in May 2023, at which exonyms would be one of the strategic goals under discussion.

70. **Mr. Al-Qurashi** (Acting Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development), panellist, said that his Commission served as the United Nations focal point on science, technology and innovation for

development. As such, it had built considerable experience and a knowledge base to provide input on discussions about digital issues within the United Nations system, including the global digital compact and its implementation and follow-up. The Commission could provide a platform for Member States and other stakeholders to monitor progress and discuss challenges related to that initiative.

71. The mandate of the Commission included facilitating the General Assembly resolutions on the implementation and follow-up of the World Summit on the Information Society and on science, technology and innovation for development. The science, technology and innovation policy review programme provided substantive policy advice to over 20 developing countries, and the Commission's secretariat at UNCTAD complemented that work by providing tools for technological foresight under a technology assessment programme. More work needed to be done to bring developing countries into the discussion on frontier technologies, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and biotechnologies. Although the development of such technologies had been limited to a small number of developed States, their implications would impact all countries. Particular needs concerning technology proliferation must be discussed in terms of both policy and necessary ethical considerations.

72. **Ms. Vukovich** (Chair of the Statistical Commission), panellist, speaking in a pre-recorded video message, said that the Council had adopted a resolution in 2022 to update the mandate of her Commission to ensure that it continued to be relevant and serve the needs of Member States by providing comprehensive data and statistics to monitor progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and beyond. It was no longer possible to consider statistics in a silo, as interlinkages between statistics and data systems evolved. The Commission worked diligently with partners to ensure that the long-term data and statistical architecture would meet future needs. In 2022, Bureau members of the Commission had engaged with other United Nations bodies to build and sustain connections to support countries in that regard. In addition, the work of the Commission provided the evidence needed to measure progress in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery by improving household surveys, conducting censuses and monitoring Sustainable Development Goal indicators and climate change.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.