United Nations

E/2023/SR.39

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 August 2023

Original: English

2023 session
25 July 2022–26 July 2023
High-level segment

Summary record of the 39th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 18 July 2023, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Chimbindi (Vice-President) .... (Zimbabwe)
later: Mr. Massari (Vice-President) .... (Italy)

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

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment on accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels (*continued*)

(a) Ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (A/78/80-E/2023/64) (*continued*)

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Stoeva** (Bulgaria), Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends for Children and Sustainable Development Goals, said that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had a clear vision for creating a better world for current and future generations. Implementation of the second half of the 2030 Agenda and the acceleration of progress towards achieving the Goals should focus on children's rights. Recent changes had left a profound impact on the lives and well-being of children and on the fulfilment of their rights. Urgent action was therefore needed to invest in children and deliver on promises of a better and more just world.

2. To fully implement the 2030 Agenda and accelerate progress on the commitments of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference of Financing for Development, transformative changes should be made to safeguard and expand public social spending on children, particularly in the areas of early childhood development, education, health, nutrition and social protection. The international community had a responsibility to reduce childhood poverty and protect children from preventable lethal diseases and malnutrition. It should also enable children to survive and thrive, by ensuring their education, particularly in fragile contexts. New and innovative financing modalities needed to be identified, and inclusive and effective partnerships should be built, to bridge fiscal gaps and meet the targets of the 2030 Agenda. Support should be provided for strategies that mobilized public, private and international resources for the rights and well-being of children through effective, equitable and transparent budgets that were in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The full and meaningful participation of children and young people in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda should be promoted by teaching all children about the Goals, inspiring them to take action in their communities and taking their voices into account during consultations.

3. **Mr. Buda** (Poland), Minister of Economic Development and Technology, said that the international community was at the halfway point of the 2030 Agenda and could not lose sight of its common goal. At the same time, there was a need to accelerate sustainable development in an evolving and challenging context. In 2017, his Government had adopted the Strategy for Responsible Development, which created a new, human-centred development model aimed at empowering all social groups to benefit from economic growth. The Strategy also focused on increasing social, economic, environmental and territorial cohesion. Poland had recorded high levels of growth following the launch of its economic transformation in 1989. Unemployment rates were currently at a record low and his Government was promoting innovation, technological progress, social justice and green transition. Poland's sustainable development model had resulted in continued improvement of its socioeconomic indicators and improved living conditions for its citizens.

4. Full implementation of the 2030 Agenda required the mobilization of public and private resources, as well as technology, know-how and creativity from all spheres of society. Globally, despite increasing volumes of so-called sustainable capital, progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals remained insufficient. There was an urgent need to develop common frameworks and standards to clearly define and measure sustainable investments and prevent claims of alignment with the Goals, in the absence of meaningful contribution to their realization. European Union regional regulations had successfully defined environmentally sustainable business activities and set guidelines for international sustainable financing. However, recent global crises, including ongoing conflicts, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and climate change, had reversed progress and had global repercussions for the three dimensions of sustainable development. In fact, the pandemic had been more than a global health crisis as it had also caused major social and economic fallout, from which the world was still recovering. In that regard, the promotion of long-term and innovative financing for sustainable development and the boosting of investment in public health and the green transition were crucial.

5. **Mr. de Figueiredo Soares** (Cabo Verde), Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration, said that current circumstances had jeopardized the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, aggravated global asymmetries and posed a significant challenge to harmonious international development.

Cabo Verde had made considerable progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goals 6, 7 and 17. However, urgent attention was required for the most vulnerable countries and, in particular, the least developed countries and small island developing States, including those classed as middle-income countries. The latter needed differential treatment in terms of access to development finance, especially for climate and ocean action, as well as for debt, trade and skills development. In that context, the work of the High-level Panel on the Development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for Small Island Developing States was extremely relevant, and his delegation remained optimistic that it would lead to the facilitation of access to concessional financing for the most vulnerable countries. The firm support of Member States and multilateral institutions in that regard was critical.

6. **Mr. Kandjoze** (Namibia), Director General of the National Planning Commission, said that only 12 per cent of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals were on track and the number of people living in extreme poverty had increased. The time had come to take bold actions to effectively address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing conflicts and the climate, biodiversity and pollution crises. From very early on, Namibia had resolved to incorporate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other development frameworks, such as the African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan of the Southern African Development Community, into its national development plans. While some progress had been made towards achieving the Goals, worldwide, that progress had been significantly impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic. His country had made headway with respect to Goals 1, 2, 5 and 15, but was lagging behind on Goal 8.

7. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda was an integral part of the 2030 Agenda and its full implementation was critical for the realization of the Goals. However, it had been extremely challenging to mobilize the resources required for that purpose, given the high cost of debt, rising global interest rates, the tightening of financial conditions imposed on fragile economies and the risk of debt distress. Namibia’s classification as a middle-income country made it difficult to mobilize resources for the financing of developmental goals, and limited access to much-needed soft loans and grants. That classification placed the country at a disadvantage, as it failed to account for historic injustices that had skewed income distribution. Measures needed to go beyond gross domestic product (GDP) and consider multidimensional vulnerabilities, in order to enable more inclusive international cooperation that left no one behind.

8. In that context, the reform of the global financial architecture was both urgent and fair. Developing countries should be able to better participate in international economic decision-making and norm-setting, and in global economic governance. The negative effects of climate change and other challenges threatened the revenues and very survival of many of those countries, and there was an urgent need to halve greenhouse gas emissions and meet climate financing commitments, including through the operationalization of the loss and damage fund. In the same vein, securing a low-carbon future through a green transition was a matter of justice, since poor people and countries were the most affected by climate change. Namibia’s renewable energy potential was in a state of flux and undergoing progressive liberalization. His Government intended to create an enabling environment wherein private sector players could increasingly participate in the energy market.

9. **Ms. Napwon Cosmos** (South Sudan), Minister of Environment and Forestry, said that it would be very difficult for her country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, owing to internal conflict, the impact of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and global economic crises. More than 2 million people had been internally displaced in South Sudan as a result of floods and droughts, and many human development indicators were lagging behind. In that regard, Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17 continued to be a priority for her Government. However, the lack of national monitoring and reporting frameworks and the high costs and risks involved in data collection made it impossible to establish baseline data for more than 70 per cent of development indicators.

10. South Sudan remained committed to strengthening its institutional capacity and creating an enabling environment for achieving Goal 6. As such, her Government was developing policies and strategic plans to provide clean water supplies and sanitation. With the support of Japan, it had recently launched the first phase of an urban water supply plant that would deliver clean water to hundreds of thousands of people. South Sudan also intended to scale up climate action by combating deforestation and introducing several renewable energy sources, while reducing the use of fossil fuels. In addition to investing in the empowerment and engagement of women and young people, her Government also intended to strengthen cooperation with development partners, the private sector, civil society organizations and communities. However, those

commitments would all require financial support, capacity-building and technology transfers.

11. **Mr. Shrestha** (Nepal), Vice-Chair of the National Planning Commission, said that the world was in deep distress and the time had come for urgent action. Sustainable development was at the core of Nepal's development vision and priorities, and underpinned national aspirations for the well-being of the population. The Sustainable Development Goals had been mainstreamed into national plans, programmes and budgets, and implemented at the provincial and local levels. The Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee had been established at the parliamentary level to monitor progress towards achieving the Goals. Nepal had made significant progress in reducing absolute poverty and increasing energy production. However, the COVID-19 pandemic had reversed development gains, and ongoing geopolitical tensions and the global financial crisis had made it even more challenging to finance the Goals and graduate from the least developed country category.

12. Furthermore, despite its negligible contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, his country was at the front line of the climate crisis. His Government remained committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2045, and had recorded notable improvements with respect to Goals 6 and 7. Nepal was preparing its sixteenth five-year periodic plan, which was focused on structural transformation for inclusive socioeconomic growth and development. To complement national efforts, there was a need for investment, technology transfers, aid for trade and technical assistance, and for development partners to fulfil their official development assistance (ODA) commitments. Easy access to climate finance was also critical, to effectively address the climate crisis. The $100 billion already committed in that regard needed to become a reality, and the loss and damage fund should be rapidly operationalized to provide support to climate-vulnerable countries like Nepal. The international financial architecture needed to be reformed and special drawing rights allocations should be reviewed, based on countries' needs and priorities. Comprehensive debt relief measures were also important, to redirect public funds towards inclusive and sustainable development. The upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit would help to galvanize political commitment at the highest level.

13. **Ms. Machon** (Denmark), State Secretary for Development Policy, said that the international community was off track in its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, elevated debt distress and climate change. At the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit, it was imperative for Member States to recommit to the 2030 Agenda in both words and action. Denmark was determined to work constructively with its partners to ensure the success of the Summit. There was a need to rebuild confidence in a common future for all and in the shared commitment to international cooperation, through dialogue and joint action.

14. Efforts to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals should also address the climate crisis, as climate and development policy were inextricably linked. That crisis had surpassed initial fears and climate change was a fundamental challenge and threat to collective ambitions to eradicate poverty and realize the Goals. Since climate action was a prerequisite for economic development and vice versa, development should be greener in nature and climate efforts needed to be bolstered. Efforts to mobilize more climate and development resources should be strengthened, in the face of the significant financing shortfall that was impeding progress on the Goals. While Denmark would continue to deliver on its commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of gross national income as ODA, there was a need to look beyond domestic resources and ODA to mobilize the required funds through private, blended and innovative financing. Reforms were required to ensure that international financial institutions helped to shift the focus away from funding towards financing.

15. **Mr. Alibrahim** (Saudi Arabia), Minister of Economy and Planning, said that the international community was seeking to accelerate its collective ability to leave no one behind. While the desired progress had not been achieved, there was a common commitment to move beyond individual efforts and adopt bold and collaborative approaches. In many fields, valuable lessons had been learned about how goals could be transformed into achievements. The world was increasingly interconnected and integrated, and challenges transcended borders in many areas, resulting in global impacts. Collaboration was therefore critical to solve the most complex global issues. Innovation and experimentation were extremely important in the search for new solutions and the discovery of possibilities. The development of human capital was an absolute priority, as individual knowledge and creativity were the bedrock of progress. Investment in education, health care and capacity-building was key for promoting sustainable development.

16. Saudi Arabia had embarked on a process of transformation, wherein the Sustainable Development Goals had been deeply embedded in national frameworks. His Government had launched the Middle

East Green Initiative as part of its commitment to environmental sustainability, renewable energy and collective action for meeting regional challenges. To foster a culture of experimentation, policymaking processes were challenging conventional wisdom, with a view to embracing innovation and paving the way for real and transformative economic changes. In addition, his Government had expanded access to quality education, provided a safety net for those in need and enhanced health-care services. Saudi Arabia's contribution of over $87 billion in international aid underscored its commitment to combating global poverty and accelerating development.

17. **Ms. Begovic** (Serbia), Minister of Science, Technology Development and Innovation, said that scientific knowledge played a pivotal role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The spread of innovation and new technologies, the promotion of research and development and the leveraging of digital advancements would revolutionize approaches and unlock new pathways towards sustainable development. Her Government had adopted a Smart Specialization Strategy that identified and nurtured areas of research excellence, such as information and communications technologies (ICTs), advanced materials and sustainable food production. The Strategy for the Development of Artificial Intelligence in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2020–2025 set a clear road map for utilizing artificial intelligence to address societal challenges, enhance efficiency and foster economic growth.

18. In an effort to address pressing challenges, strategic investments were being made to create a new ecosystem, which encompassed a Science Fund, an Innovation Fund and several Science and Technology Parks. Serbia's BioSense Institute was seeking to become a centre of excellence within the European Union, in the areas of biosensor technologies, nanotechnologies and other new technologies. The new BIO4 campus was set to become a collaborative infrastructure for academia, industry players, the private sector and the Government, for cutting-edge work in the areas of biomedicine, biotechnology, artificial intelligence and biodiversity. The integration of those fields would help to face global and local challenges, enhance sustainability, bolster economic growth and societal progress, and contribute to the realization of the Goals.

19. Global challenges required global cooperation, and Serbia had initiated the process for the proclamation of an international decade of science for sustainability by the United Nations. That initiative would elevate the role of science in addressing global challenges and advancing sustainable development. It would also create a platform for collective action, knowledge exchange and international collaboration. Serbia's active engagement in international organizations, programmes and partnerships underscored its commitment to global cooperation in science, innovation and sustainable development.

20. **Mr. Maynard** (Saint Kitts and Nevis), Minister of Public Infrastructure, Energy and Utilities, Domestic Transport, Information, Communication and Technology, and Posts, said that fulfilling the promise of leaving no one behind would require an urgent and fundamental shift. Saint Kitts and Nevis, which was affected by rising sea levels, diminishing rainfall and extreme vulnerability to natural disasters, had presented its first voluntary national review in 2023, highlighting its successes and shortcomings. His Government had embarked on a mission to transform the country into a sustainable island State by 2037, and had integrated the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans, using a people-centric approach.

21. The aim was to achieve food security through rural empowerment and use gender equity as a platform for sustainability. Support was being provided for investment in the blue, orange and green economies, as well as in the knowledge economy, with a view to advancing workers' rights and benefits and providing more opportunities for young people. Resources were being made available to encourage young people to pursue careers in the areas of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. New ministries had been created, focusing on climate action, trade and economic investment, and small enterprise development. A digital transformation unit was being established to promote e-governance. Progressive decarbonization efforts were under way, and included the incentivization of vehicle electrification and the increase of renewable energy production. In the light of its water scarcity problem and reduced rainfall, Saint Kitts and Nevis was exploring groundwater resources and introducing large-scale desalination.

22. The COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and the confounding invasions of sovereign countries had led to increases in the prices of food, energy and finance, thereby provoking a global cost-of-living crisis and wreaking havoc on smaller economies. While Saint Kitts and Nevis had contributed negligibly to global emissions, it bore the brunt of the impact of climate change, and its treasury was under the constant threat of shock events. As such, increased international support and decisive actions for climate justice had become imperative. There was an urgent need for more innovative financial instruments, increased and predictable climate finance, debt relief measures and

improved access to concessional financing. The Government and people of the Republic of China on Taiwan had provided indispensable support for the advancement of the national development agenda over the last 40 years. Greater justice was needed regarding the imposition of unilateral coercive measures that hindered some Latin American, Caribbean and Middle Eastern countries from achieving the Goals.

23. **Mr. André** (Portugal), Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, said that the international community was not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Hunger was on the rise, the pace of poverty reduction was too slow, gender inequalities were being exacerbated and action to tackle the climate crisis was insufficient. In addition, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and global conflicts had further hindered the realization of the Goals. Fortunately, however, there was cause for hope, and the time had come to increase and accelerate global efforts. To that end, there was a need for more political commitment, global solidarity and financing.

24. The following day, Portugal would be presenting its second voluntary national review, which, despite being a strenuous challenge, had also been rewarding, as it had allowed the country to go beyond the acceleration of its implementation actions to national ownership of the Goals. His Government had adopted a new inter-institutional mechanism for coordinating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level, and was developing a national road map for sustainable development, in order to incorporate the Goals into public policies. The road map would focus on the consistency and alignment of public policies; the engagement and participation of stakeholders; a multi-stakeholder communication strategy on the Goals; and awareness-raising and capacity-building among relevant actors.

25. The Portuguese Development Cooperation Strategy 2030 was fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda and prioritized the least developed countries, small island developing States, fragile countries and countries graduating from least developed country status. Portugal was actively engaged in climate change conferences and was a champion country for the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. In 2022, it had co-hosted the 2022 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Portugal was working with partner countries in key areas including climate, agriculture, governance, health, education and social protection, in alignment with the priorities of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions and the 2025 World Social Summit. It continued to increase its ODA, which had risen by 17.5 per cent since 2021, and to provide humanitarian support to Ukraine. The upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit should strengthen political commitment, galvanize leadership and restore trust, to enable the world to achieve the Goals by 2030.

26. **Mr. Tuon** (Cambodia), Secretary of State at the Ministry of Planning, said that the high-level political forum on sustainable development was an opportunity to discuss the urgent need to accelerate collective efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and overcome current challenges to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. While Cambodia had made significant strides in enhancing the well-being of its population, there was a need to address the obstacles it faced in seeking to ensure that its development was inclusive, resilient and sustainable. The world was at a critical juncture, and concurrent crises had delayed the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in many parts of the world, posing interconnected domestic challenges such as lower economic growth, eroded fiscal space and rising social issues.

27. To effectively accelerate its post-pandemic recovery, his Government had prioritized the diversification of economic growth by expanding its sources of development financing. It was also promoting the circular and green economies by scaling up development cooperation for climate resilience. Digital transformation was being fostered, with a view to closing the digital divide. Cambodia was seeking enhanced cooperation with development partners, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, in order to bring about the necessary transformations at the speed and scale required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. To improve the welfare of the population, and that of the most vulnerable in particular, his Government was investing in basic infrastructure, health, quality education, the advancement of gender equality and social protection systems.

28. **Ms. Cancela Rodriguez** (Spain), Secretary of State for International Cooperation, said that, despite the immense efforts made, progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals was under serious threat. The COVID-19 pandemic had reversed many gains, exacerbated existing inequalities and highlighted the need for effective multilateralism. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine had generated new global challenges that needed to be addressed from a developmental perspective, so that no one would be left behind. The 2030 Agenda was a

national priority for Spain, which was strongly committed to its full implementation, together with that of the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as part of its Sustainable Development Strategy 2030. The Strategy, which had been adopted in 2021, had translated the principles and objectives of the 2030 Agenda into concrete commitments. In the wake of the pandemic and the invasion of Ukraine, those commitments were enabling her country to move towards a social, digital and environmental transition that was focused on sustainability and the protection of all human rights.

29. In Spain, local and regional authorities were playing an increasingly important role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in keeping with Goal 11. Furthermore, the secretariat of the Local2030 Coalition had been established in the Spanish city of Bilbao. The 2030 Agenda and the Goals were the cross-cutting axes of the development cooperation priorities set by the Spanish presidency of the Council of the European Union. In that regard, the new Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Global Solidarity Act, which had enshrined Spain's commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of gross national income to ODA by 2030, was a major step in the fight against inequalities and poverty. It reinforced the principles of a just environmental transition and gender equality, through the strengthening and modernization of financial cooperation and by providing expertise and resources for humanitarian actions. Spain would strive to ensure that the high-level political forum and the Sustainable Development Goals Summit helped to mobilize additional resources and identify adequate measures for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It would also seek to follow up on those efforts, at the 2024 Summit of the Future and through the other initiatives outlined in Our Common Agenda.

30. **Mr. Badhib** (Yemen), Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, said that his country was at a critical juncture, between war and peace, and was therefore in urgent need of political, economic and other forms of support. The peace efforts led by the United Nations had been relatively successful, despite the violations perpetrated by extremist terrorist militias. Yemen was facing challenging economic circumstances, especially following drone attacks on its oil exporting ports by Houthi militias. In addition, reduced humanitarian support threatened prospects for peace and economic and recovery. Continued violations of international resolutions on the part of Iran and that country's insistence on smuggling weapons to terrorist militias further jeopardized those prospects.

31. Yemen had committed to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and had integrated them into its national development plans. However, the country was facing unprecedented challenges in the wake of the coup d'état carried out by the terrorist Houthi militias. Attacks on the State and the Constitution, the outcomes of the national dialogue and the Initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the occupation of several institutions had drawn Yemen into a vicious cycle of conflict and war over the previous eight years. While some progress had been made in the areas of education, health care, poverty eradication, employment, private sector development and the empowerment of women and young people, the continuous conflict had reversed a significant portion of those development gains. Significant infrastructural damage had hampered tangible progress towards realizing the Goals, requiring international and regional support. Yemen also faced chronic structural challenges and consecutive crises, which had been exacerbated since the coup d'état.

32. Food insecurity affected 60 per cent of the population and 80 per cent of people needed humanitarian assistance. Over 4.3 million people had been displaced and currently lacked basic services. At the same time, foreign debt and poverty had increased, while the economy had shrunk by 50 per cent and public revenue was on the decline. The financial crisis had been further exacerbated by the militias' targeting of the oil sector, which accounted for 56 per cent of public revenue. Already limited regional and international support had decreased in recent years, and remained focused on relief and life-saving humanitarian interventions. There was a need for medium- and long-term development interventions to bolster the economy, reduce poverty and create employment, since those areas did not receive much tangible support from guarantors and donors. His Government wished for true and sustainable peace, especially as a means of economic recovery and infrastructural and institutional reconstruction.

33. **Mr. Madera Sued** (Dominican Republic), Vice Minister of Planning and Public Investment in the Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Development, said that, as a small island developing State that was vulnerable to natural disasters, his country was committed to ensuring that the first seven years of implementing the 2030 Agenda had not been in vain. Notwithstanding the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the Dominican Republic had made every effort to accelerate its economic recovery. It was back on track towards GDP growth, was recording higher employment rates

and had returned to the inflation target range set out in its monetary policy. In record time, his Government had secured vaccines for the entire population, reopened schools and committed to reviving the tourism sector. The objective was to continue improving the well-being of the population with forward-looking solutions to current challenges.

34. In the short- to medium-term, economic, social and environmental policies would focus on the following measures: strengthening education systems and supporting technical and tertiary education programmes; implementing employment strategies that accounted for gender equity, technological transformations and artificial intelligence; developing productive sectors that made sustainable use of natural resources, generated decent jobs, and capitalized on the country’s geographical location, human capacities and potential; promoting public and private investments that allowed for climate change-related risk management and economic resilience; adapting the health-care system to the new epidemiological profile of the population and promoting lifestyle changes to prevent diseases; promoting rural development through agricultural modernization, general industrialization, and the improvement of education, health-care and basic services; and developing a modern, regulated State that combated and punished public mismanagement, while sustainably utilizing resources to finance development.

35. **Mr. Encinas Nájera** (Mexico), Undersecretary for Foreign Trade, said that in 2018, his country had embarked on a change of regime that had placed historically excluded majorities at the centre of public policy and led to the formulation of the human-centred National Development Plan 2019–2024. From the outset, it had been clear that government programmes should be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, and that the international principle of leaving no one behind should be complemented by the national premise of putting poor people first, for the good of all. That convergence was exemplified by Mexico’s approach to target 8.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which was of special importance, given that the average age in his country was 29 years.

36. In partnership with the private sector, his Government was implementing the Youth Building the Future programme, which was one of the largest and most successful on-the-job-training programmes in the world. A record-breaking total of $6 billion had been earmarked for investing in young people, many of whom had gone on to find employment or start their own businesses. Another example was the Sowing Life programme, which was aimed at increasing sustainability, food security and regional development. Close to half a million men and women from rural areas were working to reforest over a million hectares of land, with fruit and timber trees and, in so doing, were preserving ancestral traditions. As a result of such programmes, migration was no longer the only way to seek a better life, since farmers could choose to work their native lands and stay with their families.

37. Mexico had made substantial progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda and was set to present its fourth voluntary national review. Because achieving the Goals was not the sole responsibility of the Government, the review had been prepared in collaboration with representatives of social organizations, companies of different sizes, trade unions and academia. Municipal governments had also made commendable efforts to incorporate the Goals into people’s daily lives. At a time when multilateralism was being questioned on different fronts, the Goals had managed to unite all of humanity, regardless of political, religious or geographical background. The road to the halfway point of the 2030 Agenda had not been an easy one, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, but there was still time to redouble efforts and deliver better results.

38. **Mr. Balutel** (Republic of Moldova), State Secretary of the State Chancellery, said that his country remained committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Republic of Moldova was making extraordinary efforts to that end, despite the economic, energy and security challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s barbaric and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. Despite the intensification of Russian threats against the Republic of Moldova, through cyberattacks, the use of political proxies and disinformation campaigns, his Government stood firm in its mission of European integration. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals was an essential part of that mission. The National Development Strategy – European Moldova 2030, which had been adopted in 2022, included targets and indicators for the Goals. A national framework for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda had been approved and, in 2023, an annual national progress report had been published.

39. His Government was taking steps to achieve energy independence by transitioning to renewable energy, and the Republic of Moldova had exceeded the initial target of Goal 7. Major local infrastructural projects were under way, aimed at sustaining economic growth, while improving access to water, sanitation, schools and social services. Steps were being taken to close the gender gap, by ensuring alignment with and the implementation of the Council of Europe

Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. The implementation of systematic domestic reforms in the justice sector was being accelerated, with a view to beginning accession negotiations with the European Union.

40. Despite the progress made, there was still a long way to go to achieve the Goals. Global partnerships and international solidarity and cooperation would be critical in that regard. With the support of its partners and friends, the Republic of Moldova had managed to attract the resources needed to overcome crises, while pursuing its path towards a European future and the achievement of the Goals. In the wake of a recent meeting of the European Political Community in the Republic of Moldova, his country would persist in its efforts to contribute to peace, security, energy resilience, connectivity and mobility within Europe and beyond. It would also continue to support Ukraine by hosting refugees, contributing to solidarity lanes and providing humanitarian assistance.

41. **Mr. Isaev** (Kyrgyzstan), First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that his country had made significant progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through the tireless efforts of his Government and its international partners, including United Nations agencies and programmes, and in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023–2027 for Kyrgyzstan and its two-year joint work programme. The Goals had been incorporated into all strategic development documents, including the National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018–2040.

42. Climate and environmental factors played a very important role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and Kyrgyzstan was seeking to develop international cooperation in that area. It had initiated efforts towards the proclamation of the period 2023–2027 as Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions in General Assembly resolution 77/172, and was grateful for the unanimous support of Member States in that regard. To support the implementation of the proclamation, a draft global framework for action had been prepared, in collaboration with the Mountain Partnership, and would be presented the following day.

43. In keeping with previous calls for international financial institutions to support developing countries on climate action and reduce their debt burdens, Kyrgyzstan was appealing to the international community for support in the areas of the environment and the green economy. It had proposed a mechanism for exchanging external debt for green initiatives, which was aimed at improving the global environmental situation. His Government also proposed to create a trust fund to that end, which it would co-manage with international partners, to ensure full transparency. Such initiatives would contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, the development of a green economy, the solution of global climate issues and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Industrial and agricultural development inevitably led to some extent of environmental degradation, particularly in mountainous regions, and uranium mining was therefore prohibited by law in Kyrgyzstan, to avoid potential damage to the country and the region as a whole.

44. **Mr. de Vega** (Philippines), Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, said that concrete, decisive and transformative actions were needed to ensure the coherent and proactive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals and targets were entrenched in his country’s middle- and long-term development objectives, as contained in the Philippine Development Plan for the period 2023–2028. The Philippines had already presented voluntary national reviews in 2016, 2019 and 2022, and remained closely engaged in the process as Co-Chair of the Group of Friends of the Voluntary National Reviews. There was a need to reform the international financial and development cooperation mechanisms, in order to make them more responsive, impactful and fit for purpose. Those mechanisms should also be more inclusive and take the realities of middle-income countries into consideration. Commitments to support developing countries needed to be met, by providing financing, capacity-building and technology transfers, so that no one was left behind.

45. The Philippines remained committed to the 2030 Agenda, at the national, regional and global levels, and its implementation was a sacred responsibility to present and future generations. In preparation for the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit, his Government was working to enhance statistical and data availability on the Goals by monitoring progress towards the formulation of effective and evidence-based policies and catch-up plans; deepen understanding of the interlinkages among Goals, with Goal 12 being the most interlinked of them all; institutionalize multi-stakeholder engagement and effective resource mobilization; and leverage international cooperation and other public financing initiatives, including through South-South and triangular cooperation and twinning agreements. As a migrant-sending country and a champion for the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly

and Regular Migration, the Philippines believed that the Compact could make a valuable contribution to migration and the sustainable development of migrants, in keeping with Goal 17. It could serve to reduce poverty and bolster development efforts in countries of origin and destination.

46. Assertions that the international community had failed to realize the Goals and that they needed to be rescued negated and undermined the work that had been collectively accomplished to implement the 2030 Agenda. Member States had committed to its lofty ideals with an acute sense of responsibility to humanity. Greater solidarity was needed in moving forward towards the finish line.

47. **Mr. Lootah** (United Arab Emirates), Deputy Minister of Cabinet Affairs for Competitiveness and Knowledge Exchange and Chair of the Emirates Competitive Council, said that the international community had come to a turning point with respect to the Sustainable Development Goals, and had an opportunity to fulfil its commitments and fight climate change by limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The United Arab Emirates had made significant progress towards realizing the Goals, and had aligned all national plans with the 2030 Agenda. The National Committee on the Sustainable Development Goals had been established to oversee the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and ensure the participation of stakeholders from various sectors. That Committee had developed national indicators to support the Government in its management and implementation efforts.

48. Measures were being taken to ensure coherency between the Goals and foreign aid polices, particularly in sectors such as food and energy. The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development and other international initiatives provided critical assistance to several countries, including in the area of nutrition, to bolster global efforts to eradicate hunger. The United Arab Emirates was working with the international community to ensure that the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change would successfully meet global needs. Sustainable development could only be achieved by tackling climate change, and doing so would require the reform of international financing systems and the strengthening of climate action across sectors such as the environment, health, security and humanitarian action.

49. **Mr. Hossain** (Bangladesh), Principal Coordinator for Sustainable Development Goal Affairs at the Office of the Prime Minister, said that Bangladesh had made steady progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by building on its experience of realizing the Millennium Development Goals. Those efforts had faced serious challenges following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the very year in which the country had presented its second voluntary national review. Increasingly frequent and intense human-made crises, natural disasters and the war in Ukraine had also negatively affected the national economy and the achievement of the Goals, resulting in market shocks, rising inflation, supply chain disruptions and food, energy and financial crises.

50. While Bangladesh was on track to meet several targets of Goal 6, as a growing percentage of its population currently had access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation services, many challenges persisted, including high levels of water stress and arsenic contamination. A milestone had been reached in March 2022, when the country had attained full coverage of its population in terms of access to electricity. With respect to Goal 9, several key obstacles remained, including the high cost of doing business, lack of quality infrastructure, management of land constraints, insufficient foreign direct investment and low access to efficient public utilities. To address those issues, his Government was developing adequate policy frameworks in the areas of transport, ICTs and trade.

51. The time had come for bold, ambitious, accelerated and transformative actions that were anchored in international solidarity and effective cooperation at all levels. Efforts to achieve the Goals were being hindered by resource constraints, capacity deficits, limited access to affordable financing for development, lack of efficient technologies, unsustainable debt levels and inadequate climate action. The world should support developing countries like Bangladesh, which were disproportionately affected by the interlinked global crises, and help them to realize the Goals by 2030 and attain upper middle-income status by 2031.

52. *Mr. Massari (Italy), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

53. **Ms. Barseghyan** (Russian Federation), Director of the Integration Development Department at the Eurasian Economic Commission, said that the Eurasian Economic Union had been the first regional integration association to submit a comprehensive report on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the high-level political forum in 2017. It was one of the most advanced economic unions and, within its 10 years of actively developing integration processes, its members had seen their GDP increase by over 9 per cent, while their resilience to internal and external shocks had been proven by positive trends in several

macroeconomic indicators. Regional economic integration contributed to the achievement of the Goals and was a complementary tool for ensuring high quality and sustainable economic growth. Progress towards realizing the Goals appeared to be more significant in areas where integration cooperation was being actively developed.

54. The freedoms guaranteed by the Eurasian Economic Union, including the freedom of movement of capital and labour, were having a tangible impact on the achievement of the Goals. The Eurasian Economic Union was seeking to improve its approach to evaluating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by expanding the set of indicators used in its member States and adopting additional indicators to assess the impact of integration on progress in realizing the Goals. It was implementing strategic guidelines for developing Eurasian economic integration by 2025, including by expanding cooperation in the areas of education, science, health care, tourism and sports. The aspirations of the Eurasian Economic Union were closely aligned to those of the United Nations, particularly in the areas of hunger eradication, health and education.

55. Global partnerships were critical for achieving the Goals, and the Eurasian Economic Union promoted equitable dialogue among integration entities, for the more effective functioning of the global economic architecture. It had developed a wide network of integration partners in all regions of the world. Direct dialogue among integration entities would not only promote progress towards achieving the Goals, but also help to increase predictability and trust. Realizing the Goals was a common cause, which required united efforts and the mobilization of resources by all international actors. To that end, the Eurasian Economic Union remained open to dialogue.

56. **Mr. Collet** (Kingdom of the Netherlands), Deputy Vice Minister for International Cooperation, said that the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit had become urgent, in the light of recent crises and their disproportionate impact on developing countries. The case for a Sustainable Development Goals stimulus was clear and the international community need to step up its efforts in that regard. The Kingdom of the Netherlands was actively engaged to that end, and continued to make consistent and significant donations, both bilaterally and through multilateral development banks and the United Nations. Addressing the shortfall in financing would require interlinked solutions, in which the private sector would play a key role.

57. With the support of his Government, the country's financial sector was working on practical and innovative solutions. The Amsterdam-based ILX Fund had already raised over $1 billion from national pension funds for investment in the Goals. Investments in key sectors would be critical for success in moving multiple Goals forward. One such sector was that of water, which was the most valuable collective good and a defining challenge of current times. Failure in the area of water would lead to failure on all the Goals. The United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028 (United Nations 2023 Water Conference) and the ensuing water action agenda were a basis for accelerating progress on water-related Goals and placing water at the heart of political decision-making. They had helped to strengthen cooperation among small island developing States, including within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Goals needed to serve as guidelines in the formulation of national policies. Accordingly, the Kingdom of the Netherlands had strengthened its Goal-related assessment of all new policies in order to fulfil the commitment made to present and future generations.

58. **Ms. Timsi** (Kingdom of the Netherlands), youth delegate, said that global temperatures were at record levels and over 100 million people had been displaced, 43 million of whom were children. Global crises were disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups and the future was daunting for young people. Humanity shared common hopes, and the focus should be placed on similarities instead of differences. Young people were not liabilities, but rather active agents of change, and youth delegates were working together to introduce a United Nations generational test that would serve as an accountability mechanism for measuring the impact of policies on current and future generations. The mechanism would seek to ensure that policies took into account the needs of future generations and addressed intergenerational inequalities. Intergenerational solidarity was needed to ensure that actions were youth-responsive and promoted human rights and environmental justice in all regions.

59. **Ms. Mang'eni** (Kenya), Principal Secretary, State Department for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, said that her country had mainstreamed the 2030 Agenda into national development plans at all levels of government and had set up appropriate institutions to oversee its implementation. By adopting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, Kenya had made progress towards achieving several Sustainable Development Goals, before the COVID-19 pandemic, which had adversely affected primary sectors of its economy and reversed most of its development

gains. While the pandemic had been most prejudicial to young people, women, persons with disabilities and those in marginalized situations, the Kenyan people had shown great resilience and renewed optimism for recovery.

60. To bolster that resilience, turn around the economy and ensure inclusive growth, her Government had implemented the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda, which was aimed at stimulating economic participation, increasing job creation, ensuring equitable income distribution, enhancing social security, expanding the tax base and increasing foreign exchange. The Agenda was anchored in agricultural transformation and placed a renewed focus on the growth of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, affordable housing, universal health care, digitization and the monetization of creative industries. The Financial Inclusion Fund had been launched in December 2022 to facilitate access to affordable credit for individuals and small to medium-sized businesses through mobile money technology. Over $250 million had already been disbursed to more than 21 million Kenyans, countrywide.

61. However, like many other developing and middle-income countries, Kenya remained burdened by unsustainable debt, which hindered its ability to invest in the Goals. The global financial system had fallen short in addressing the complex challenges faced, including post-pandemic recovery, the climate emergency and the debt crisis, especially in the global South. There was a need to reform that system in a way that acknowledged the capacities of developing countries, ensured mutually beneficial outcomes and provided affordable, sufficient and sustainable financing in a timely manner. The proposed Sustainable Development Goals stimulus package of $100 billion needed to be actualized in order to offset the challenging market conditions faced by developing countries.

62. The impact of climate change on food security and the cost of living was being felt all over the globe, and the high prices of basic commodities had been exacerbated by current geopolitical tensions. Kenya had stepped up climate adaptation and mitigation efforts through initiatives relating to green energy, smart agriculture, decarbonized manufacturing, e-mobility and green construction, all aimed at achieving net-zero status by 2050. Her Government had taken proactive steps towards establishing a unified African position on climate change for the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. To that end, it would be hosting the African Climate Summit in September 2023, with a view to advancing climate action and protecting the planet. In building on the lessons learned from the pandemic, the international community needed to develop a rescue plan for humanity and the planet, using political action, partnership and shared prosperity to reinvigorate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

63. **Ms. Coleman** (United States of America), Deputy Administrator for Policy and Programming, said that early efforts grounded in the Sustainable Development Goals had resulted in progress and hope. However, at the halfway point of the 2030 Agenda, that progress had stalled. The COVID-19 pandemic had devastated health-care systems and economies, climate change threatened lives on every continent and countries had backslid on democracy, human rights and gender equality. The international community needed to strengthen its commitment to achieving the Goals. In the lead-up to the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, her Government had therefore adopted a comprehensive approach to support its developing country partners.

64. As part of its commitment to achieve all 17 Goals, the United States had identified clear and urgent priorities, including responding to complex emergencies in the short term, while investing in peace, resilience and food security, in the long term. It was seeking to help countries to withstand the effects of climate change, strengthen good governance by fighting corruption and digital repression, reverse the decline in life expectancy and the decimation of health-care systems, and address negative economic prospects. To pursue those objectives, her Government was revitalizing development partnerships by working more deliberately with local organizations. It was using its convening power across multilateral institutions, development banks, regional bodies and partner Governments, in order to align its efforts and amplify its impact.

65. Joint measures should be taken to facilitate the evolution of multilateral development banks, promote macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability, and mobilize public and private capital for development. Quality development financing needed to be expanded, in accordance with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Governments should play a greater role in creating enabling environments for private sector investment and mobilizing tools for derisking investments, where appropriate. While there was a clear potential for shoring up decades of development gains, leaving no one behind required renewed commitments and new approaches to partnerships for catalysing new investments and modernizing institutions.

66. **Mr. Ambrazevich** (Belarus), Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that sustainable development was

only possible in situations of sustainable peace. For peace to be sustainable, the concerns of all stakeholders had to be taken into account and their individual interests needed to be balanced to an acceptable degree. The world was facing a grave global security and trust crisis, which had revealed the desire of certain actors to advance their own interests at the expense of others. The response of those who disagreed with that approach had given rise to confrontations and to the deterioration of the international security architecture and the system of international law. Those developments threatened the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the very existence of humanity itself. For the international community to reprioritize development and productivity, it needed to reach an agreement on conditions for sustainable peace as soon as possible. Without such an agreement, any initiatives to accelerate the achievement of the Goals were bound to fail.

67. All States were at different levels of development and had their own individual characteristics, which should be respected. A new balance of interests should provide security guarantees to all nations and freedom from interference in their internal affairs. The international community should put an end to the unilateral coercive measures imposed by certain States, on the sheer basis of their might. Those in agreement with that approach should carefully listen to the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights at the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit and condemn the use of such measures, which were incompatible with sustainable development. In the same vein, there should be targeted condemnation of the ban by Lithuania, the United States of America and the European Union on the transit of potash fertilizer from Belarus to developing countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. The right of every country to access affordable food, fertilizers, energy and other resources should be recognized and safeguarded. Only then would the United Nations mission to leave no one behind be feasible, since economic and technological gaps would be significantly reduced.

68. Despite the unilateral coercive measures imposed on it by Western States, Belarus had maintained its efforts to fulfil its international obligations under the 2030 Agenda, and currently ranked among the top 35 per cent of countries in terms of achievement of the Goals. Its Council for Sustainable Development was fully functional, and the Goals had been successfully integrated into national strategic documents. His country had presented voluntary national reviews in 2017 and 2022, and planned to submit a third review in 2025. Achieving the Goals was an ambitious challenge for all countries and could not be done single-handedly. In the current context, Belarus had focused its efforts and resources on the development of regional economic integration within the Eurasian Economic Union and on bilateral cooperation with likeminded States. Accordingly, it had been able to shift export flows from the West to the East and had expanded its economic cooperation with the global South. His country stood ready to offer its products and expertise in the areas of mechanical engineering, agriculture, information technologies, and educational and medical services. All interested partners were invited to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation in trade and other sectors, as part of common efforts to achieve sustainable peace and, ultimately, sustainable development.

69. **Ms. Tripodi** (Italy), Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, said that the multiple crises of recent years had curbed the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The international community was at a critical juncture that would determine whether or not it achieved the Sustainable Development Goals. Italy was actively engaged in strategically revitalizing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in several priority sectors, with particular focus on certain vulnerable geographic regions.

70. Later that month, her country would be hosting the second United Nations Food Systems Summit, to follow-up on its predecessor held in 2021. Goal 2 bore strategic value for the entire 2030 Agenda, as it affected all of the other Goals. The transformation of food systems was an urgent matter. Food systems needed be strengthened to feed the world population, more sustainable to limit their impact on the environment and climate change, and more resilient in the face of systemic challenges and external shocks. Italy was determined to make the Food Systems Summit inclusive and address geographic and thematic perspectives that could make substantial contributions to the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit.

71. During its presidency of the Group of Seven in 2024, Italy would continue to prioritize food security and highlight its nexus with the climate crisis. In an effort to combat climate change, her Government had recently launched a national climate fund, to which it would contribute €840 million annually, from 2022 to 2026. The fund was expected to considerably enhance Italy’s actions for sustainable development at the global level, owing to its large pool of financial resources and the versatility of its uses, and was her country’s main tool for achieving its objectives in the climate sector and realizing the Goals. Aligning the fund with national cooperation and climate policies would enable Italy to bolster its climate change mitigation and adaptation

efforts. The focus would be placed on interventions for growth in the social and economic sectors, and on the management of water resources and sanitation.

72. The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation was committed to the promotion of the Goals on a global scale, with a special emphasis on the African continent. To that end the so-called “Mattei plan for Africa” would be launched later that year, to establish equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with African countries. There was a need for more investment in Africa to simultaneously tackle issues such as energy, security, the environment, employment, technology transfers and migration flows. To that end, women and young people would need to play a key role, and interlinkages would need to be established between professional training and employment. Italy therefore intended to promote the development of local small and medium-sized enterprises by engaging its private sector. It also aimed to strengthen strategic partnerships on food security with all African and Mediterranean countries by highlighting the priority themes of those countries at the Food Systems Summit and working with them to achieve their objectives.

73. Despite setbacks in achieving the Goals, there was still time to obtain important results. The international community must renew its commitment to the 2030 Agenda and acknowledge that international cooperation for sustainable development was the only way to ensure robust societies and economies.

74. **Mr. Reubi** (Switzerland), Delegate of the Federal Council for the 2030 Agenda, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation, said that the moment had come to take stock of what had been achieved since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and draw lessons for the years ahead. The COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity, high energy prices, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution were all interconnected and had all adversely affected life on the planet. All stakeholders needed to redouble their efforts and make their societies more resilient, sustainable and inclusive. Switzerland had presented its second voluntary national review in 2022 and remained committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Despite the progress made, further efforts were required to accelerate that progress.

75. Ensuring that political ambitions remained aligned with international commitments would require support at the highest level from all Governments. Such support would enable all countries, cities and actors to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Cities and towns were the most appropriate actors for realizing the Goals, since they were in close contact with populations and therefore best able to identify concrete solutions. In that regard, the Forum of Mayors, which had recently been established by the Economic Commission for Europe, would be a valuable ally in guaranteeing that cities and towns were part of the solution.

76. Water was one of the most precious commodities and, as such, remained a main priority of the 2023 development agenda, in the wake of the United Nations 2023 Water Conference and the in-depth review of Goal 6. It was critical to maintain that momentum, in preparation for the implementation of the proposed water action agenda.

77. The successful adoption of effective public policies hinged on the availability of accurate, reliable and comparable data. There was a need to improve and invest in the collection of statistics relating to the Goals, with a view to enabling Governments to make informed decisions and better anticipate. Interdisciplinary science and innovation were key elements for fulfilling international ambitions. There should be more collaboration with the private sector to develop innovative solutions, particularly within financial markets. Such collaboration would require a favourable environment and high levels of transparency. International organizations also needed to do their part, following the example of the World Trade Organization and its proposed investment facilitation agreement, which would generate more high-quality investments for sustainable development.

78. **Mr. Mahdi** (Kuwait), Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, said that his country was committed to the promotion of international dialogue aimed at addressing global challenges and enhancing international cooperation for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. For decades, Kuwait had been making efforts to increase awareness of socioeconomic challenges and take measures as part of its quest to align its national strategies with the 2030 Agenda. Those efforts included dialogue with various entities in the scientific, academic, civil society, government and community sectors, as well as with regional and international bodies. The aim was to implement relevant sustainable development norms, using a methodological approach that covered efforts on the ground and cultural aspects.

79. Kuwait had made significant progress with respect to free education and food security by providing equal opportunities, regardless of gender. Efforts in the areas of the environment, infrastructure, water and the implementation of national projects were based on transparent partnerships with the private sector. His Government had provided assistance to populations

affected by crises and economic challenges. Its voluntary national review reflected Kuwait's efforts towards and vision for the realization of the Goals, while highlighting the socioeconomic and environmental challenges faced. His Government remained committed to implementing the relevant conventions that it had ratified, with a view to solidifying the country's international standing as a champion of international peace and security.

80. **Mr. Gyan-Baffour** (Ghana), Chair of the National Development Planning Commission, said that the COVID-19 pandemic had adversely affected his country's economy by provoking a decline in employment, an increase in the debt-to-GDP ratio, a drop in the fiscal balance, and reductions in GDP growth and the demand for goods and services. As part of its recovery effort, his Government had established the Ghana COVID-19 Alleviation and Revitalization of Enterprises Support (CARES) programme, to provide financial support to affected businesses. Ghana had also received support from the international community in that regard, and had concluded an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), for extended credit facilities. A post-pandemic programme for economic growth had been set up to mobilize domestic revenue, streamline and rationalize expenditure, boost the local productive capacity, promote and diversify exports, protect the poor and vulnerable, expand digital and climate-responsive fiscal infrastructure and implement structural and public reforms.

81. Notwithstanding the fiscal consolidation undertaken within the context of IMF obligations, Ghana had doubled the level of benefits and expanded the coverage of its Livelihood Employment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme for cash transfers, with the goal of further expansion by 2024. The budget allocation for the Ghana School Feeding Programme had been increased to offset the impact of inflation and ensure that children received more nutritious meals at school. The implementation of water projects had been intensified, with the aim of providing access to drinking water to 90 per cent of the population by the end of 2023. The active membership of the National Health Insurance Scheme had been increased to 55 per cent of the population. While progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals had been moderate, Ghana remained committed to the 2030 Agenda and determined to leave no one behind.

82. **Ms. Poblete Maureira** (Chile), Undersecretary of Social Evaluation, said that her country was preparing to present its third voluntary national review of its implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which was the best guideline for advancing in the face of global crises and leaving no one behind. Chile's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals had been seriously hampered by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic and climate crises and geopolitical tensions. To address those challenges, Chile had sought consensus and collaborative actions to increase sustainability, including through the adoption of the National Strategy for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which outlined a road map for that purpose. It also participated in various mechanisms, such as regional dialogues with representatives of various sectors, which sought to promote greater ownership of the 2030 Agenda through the strengthening of local partnerships.

83. The national vision transcended government cycles, with the aim of ensuring a more inclusive and sustainable country, where social, environmental and economic considerations were peacefully and justly balanced, for the good of the people and their human rights. It also sought to mainstream gender perspectives and promote public policies that reduced social vulnerabilities and strengthened social protection systems. With respect to the environment, her Government was adopting different plans and legislation relating to water governance, sustainable cities, ocean conservation, circular economy and climate action. In terms of production and innovation, Chile had transformed its matrix of energy supply through a State policy aimed at developing infrastructure capacities in key sectors, such as the green hydrogen and lithium industries. Such developments would set the foundation for a green economy on the pillars of territorial equality, gender equity and decent work, in accordance with the international commitments contained in the Paris Agreement.

84. At the halfway point of the implementation period of the 2030 Agenda, significant challenges remained to be addressed, especially in developing countries, which were in urgent need of renewed multilateralism, for the achievement of the Goals. The upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit would be a unique opportunity for Member States to commit to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, to leave no one behind.

85. **Ms. Merquel** (Argentina), President of the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies, said that 2023 was a critical year in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The multidimensional crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and foreign debt had made it necessary to develop mechanisms for reversing the situation. The commitment to leave no one behind was no longer an act of solidarity, but one of justice. The pandemic had worsened inequalities among States,

leaving the economies of many low- and middle-income countries extremely weakened and heavily indebted. Argentina would continue to support the reform of the international financial system, the need to increase South-South and even North-South cooperation, actions for improving education levels and living conditions, the fight against climate change, respect for the Charter of the United Nations and for human rights, and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

86. As a food producer and exporter, her country was working assiduously to eradicate hunger and promote food systems. It supported joint efforts to address growing food insecurity, which, according to projections by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, would affect the same proportion of the world population in 2030 as it had in 2015, when the 2030 Agenda was adopted. Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic was slow, particularly in developing countries, which had been disproportionately affected and exposed to more challenges, including in terms of unsustainable debt and structural inequalities. Human rights, and especially those of historically discriminated against and vulnerable groups, were a priority for Argentina, which sought to promote and protect them in all forums. It was also critical to accelerate the empowerment and autonomy of women in all their diversity. Her Government had therefore placed special emphasis on gender equality and diversity policies by creating the Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity and the National Cabinet for the Mainstreaming of Gender Policies.

87. **Mr. Coulibaly** (Mali), Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, said that his country remained committed to achieving the common objectives of eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities and conserving the environment, within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Mali had faced health-care, sociopolitical and economic upheavals, in addition to security challenges. As the global community embarked on a decade of action to deliver the Goals, greater momentum was needed in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The efforts made in that regard should be assessed, and there should be a collective acknowledgement that more could be done, at all levels, starting with political mobilization around the fundamental elements of sustainable development.

88. His Government would continue to strive to achieve the Goals, and had already adopted several measures aimed reducing poverty by strengthening social protection systems and providing increased health-care coverage and money transfers. Mali was therefore seeking to protect the most vulnerable social groups, such as children, by collaborating with partners such as the United Nations Children Fund. Various services were being offered to each age group of the population to improve access to health care, nutrition, water, sanitation and vocational training. Global challenges should not hinder the will of the international community to overcome poverty and inequalities, which were often the root causes of crises, such as the security crisis that had been imposed on the Sahel region following military interventions in Libya. As a result of their increased equipment and training, the national armed forces were successfully combating terrorism to better protect lives and property and to reinstate the authority of the State. As part of the transition towards stability, a constitutional referendum had recently been held, marking the commitment of the Malian authorities to return to peace and security.

89. **Mr. Gudmundsson** (Iceland), Special Envoy for Sustainable Development, said that the international community was not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and had even regressed on some targets. Since the convening of the last Sustainable Development Goals Summit in 2019, the world had faced incredible challenges, many of them human-made, making it necessary to redouble efforts to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Iceland was presenting its second voluntary national review in 2023, which included contributions from several stakeholders, in addition to government assessments, and charted the road ahead to meeting realizing the Goals. Iceland was dedicated to analysing the spillover effects that its efforts had on other countries and addressing them in its policymaking and actions. To that end, his Government had mandated the preparation of a special report on the issue, outlining the challenges and tasks at hand.

90. Sustainable Iceland, a new cooperation platform, had been established the year before, to formulate a national strategy and action plan for sustainable development and coordinate the Government’s collaboration with different stakeholders. It was managed by the national Sustainability Council, which comprised government ministers and representatives of political parties, municipalities, the private sector and civil society organizations. A total of 40 well-being indicators had been developed to monitor the quality of life in Iceland, using factors that went beyond traditional economic measures such as GDP. Work on the strategy would entail compiling a status report on ongoing efforts within the Government and with stakeholders, describing the progress made and the challenges to be addressed at home and through international cooperation. The action plan would cover the period 2024–2028 and define priorities and focus areas in terms

of the Goals, with special emphasis on gender equality, which was the Goal with the slowest global progress to date.

91. The top domestic priority was to reduce carbon emissions and, to that end, electricity and heating needs were exclusively met by green energies, mainly from hydrological and geothermal sources. The energy transition for land, sea and air transport was ongoing, and required more careful utilization of energy. Reducing emissions would require the development of a circular economy and continued support for research and innovation to find green and nature-based solutions. Iceland remained committed to the Goals and to implementing the 2030 Agenda both nationally and through international cooperation.

92. **Mr. Baharum** (Malaysia), Director of the Environmental and Natural Resources Division of the Ministry of Economy, said that, despite the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, his country remained committed to stepping up efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Malaysia Madani policy framework adopted by his Government promoted the objective of a thriving nation, based on the core principles of sustainability, compassion, respect innovation, prosperity and trust, in keeping with the principle of leaving no one behind. A whole-of-nation approach was imperative for achieving the Goals. To that end, the National Sustainable Development Goals Council had been established to promote participation by the public and private sectors, civil society organizations and academic institutions. Strong partnerships were important to ensure commitment from all relevant actors.

93. Since localization of the Goals was crucial for greater inclusion and sustainability, Malaysia would be presenting four voluntary local reviews that year, and aimed to have 30 per cent of local authorities submitting voluntary local reviews by 2025. Its national development policies had been aligned with the national road map for realizing the Goals, to ensure their achievement. While considerable progress had been made in improving data for tracking Goal-related indicators, technical assistance in bridging the data gap would support and accelerate collective actions for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Recovery from the pandemic provided a unique opportunity for building a more resilient and sustainable future. The time had therefore come to transition to greener economies, low-carbon infrastructure, and sustainable production and consumption. To make that shift, there was an urgent need to mobilize investments for renewable energies, promote circular economies and conserve biodiversity. Partnerships should be enhanced through the exchange of best practices, knowledge and means of implementation, in order to bolster global peace, security, prosperity and sustainable development.

94. **Ms. Razaivaovololoniania** (Madagascar), Secretary-General of the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, said that the high-level political forum was a pivotal moment for the least developed countries. It would help them to prepare for the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit and consolidate more concrete actions for implementing the 2030 Agenda in areas such as the environment, energy, the industrial sector and housing.

95. Madagascar had made progress in increasing access to clean drinking water, sanitation services, and affordable, sustainable and reliable energy sources. Her Government had embarked on a programme of industrialization using the so-called “one district, one factory” approach, and was seeking to ensure decent housing, basic services, slum upgrading and urban development. The country’s first green, intelligent and sustainable towns were being created to reduce overpopulation in the capital city. The sustainable management of natural resources was being improved as part of the environmental transition to address climate change, conserve biodiversity, combat forest fires and restore forests. Disaster risk reduction measures were also being operationalized.

96. However, Madagascar was not yet on track to achieve the Goals. It faced challenges relating to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the mobilization of additional investment. Her Government was open to all forms of bilateral, multilateral, North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. Realizing the Goals required innovative, inclusive, integrated and cross-sectoral approaches and strategies that were adapted to international contexts. Madagascar remained committed to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

97. **Ms. Mulube** (Zambia), Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, said that the international community was facing a complex set of challenges, including rising poverty, geopolitical conflicts and fragility, growing inequalities and a refugee crisis, which had all been aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. Only 12 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals were on track, while the others were stalled or regressing, and there was a shortfall in financing of over $4 trillion for their achievement. It was therefore critical to set the tone for the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals Summit and the Summit of the Future.

98. Accordingly, there was a need for ambitious commitment and clear positions towards accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level, and for bold engagement on intended nationally determined contributions to the global response to climate change. Since affordable and concessional financing was crucial for making progress on the Goals, developed countries and those belonging to the Group of 20 should support the proposed stimulus package for the Goals and other calls to action. Greater efforts were needed to eradicate poverty and vulnerabilities, together with more international solidarity for exploring and mobilizing new sources of domestic finance. The proposed stimulus would not only allow developing countries to increase progress, by leveraging innovative approaches, but also catalyse transformative actions to bring about the desired socioeconomic development by supporting investments in important sectors. Furthermore, it would help those countries to make their economies more resilient, address unemployment and improve the well-being of their population. The international financial architecture should be reformed so that financing for the Goals could go where it was most needed.

99. Her Government remained committed to addressing development challenges and building momentum for the realization of both the Goals and national aspirations. Its key interventions included the implementation of an economic recovery programme, within the framework of the Eighth National Development Plan 2022–2026, to restore macroeconomic stability, support fiscal stabilization and foster higher and more inclusive growth. Zambia had made significant progress towards restructuring its debt, with a view to promoting economic recovery. It had increased investments in the education and health sectors in order to recruit human resources, provide the requisite supplies and increase access to public services. Advances had been made in enhancing the coverage and scope of social protection programmes, such as cash transfers, pension schemes and food subsidies. At the local level, her Government had significantly increased annual budget allocations for its Constituency Development Fund, in order to enable local communities to make decisions on development projects.

100. **Mr. Gatete** (Rwanda), Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations, said that global economic growth was forecast to continue on its downward trend in 2023 to attain the weakest growth levels on record since 2001, with the exception of the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated financial crisis. Many of the Sustainable Development Goals were moderately or severely off track, which had led to the proposal of recommendations for rescuing the Goals and accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in the lead-up to the Sustainable Development Goals Summit. As countries strove to address the impact of multiple global crises, it was essential to target effective and inclusive recovery measures, which could ensure progress towards achieving the Goals.

101. Given its commitment to sustainable development and poverty reduction, Rwanda could serve as an example, with respect to actionable policy guidance for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda, at all levels. Its commendable response to the pandemic had underscored the protection of public health and the mitigation of socioeconomic impacts. His Government had focused its interventions on providing support to vulnerable populations and ensuring their access to health care, food security and social protection. It had also recognized the importance of an integrated approach to the Goals that encompassed all dimensions of sustainable development, and had therefore adopted a multisectoral strategy combining public health measures, economic recovery plans and social welfare programmes. By aligning those efforts with the Goals, Rwanda aimed to build back better and create a more resilient and inclusive society. Its recovery measures had prioritized several key areas, such as education and digital literacy; entrepreneurship, innovation and industrialization; and climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and renewable energy sources. His Government was investing in sustainable agriculture and green infrastructure not only to address climate change, but also to advance efforts to eradicate hunger, provide clean water and sanitation, and protect terrestrial ecosystems.

102. To enhance its inclusive recovery, Rwanda was involving all sectors of society in the decision-making process, including civil society organizations and the private sector. The lessons learned during the implementation of the first national development strategy would be leveraged, together with the Goals, to achieve its aspirations of economic and social transformation.

103. **Ms. Zalabata Torres** (Colombia), Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations, said that progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda had been insufficient, and commitments and efforts for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals were in jeopardy. In the midst of a planetary crisis and in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an urgent need to reaffirm the promise of a better that left no one behind. Science and ancestral knowledge were clearly showing the way forward for reversing

current trends and accelerating action. In accordance with its National Development Plan 2022–2026, Colombia remained committed to embarking on that path and to encouraging the global community to follow suit by accelerating decarbonization and the just energy transition; integrating biodiversity conservation in all sectors and protecting nature, in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples; prioritizing social and environmental justice in the fight against inequality; designing public policies with differential and intersectional approaches focusing on the most vulnerable groups; and closing gender gaps, while guaranteeing women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons the full and effective enjoyment of their rights, participation in decision-making and freedom from gender-based violence.

104. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda would not be possible without the true inclusion of all relevant actors, at the international, national and local levels. It would require significant reforms of current development cooperation dynamics, which relied exclusively on economic criteria for decision-making and resource allocation, without reflecting the multidimensional nature of development. Review and monitoring mechanisms should be strengthened and reviewed. Colombia would present its voluntary national review in 2024, with a view to assessing its progress towards becoming a global powerhouse.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.