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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 3rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 29 September 2023, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Marschik ..... (Austria)  
*later:* Ms. Monica ..... (Bangladesh)

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

**Agenda item 24: Social development (continued)**  
(A/78/236)

**(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (continued)** (A/78/211)

**(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, persons with disabilities and the family (continued)** (A/78/134, A/78/157, A/78/187, A/78/188, A/78/189 and A/78/331)

1. **Ms. Wagner** (Switzerland) said that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had erased the progress that had previously been made by United Nations agencies and States in eliminating poverty. Switzerland supported the convening of the world social summit in 2025, which would help to address the structural causes of poverty, the deleterious effect of conflicts and the social impact of climate change. As underlined by the Secretary-General, the transition to a more inclusive, equitable, resilient and sustainable development was dependent on social justice. Inequality was politically corrosive, weakening social cohesion and discrediting democratic institutions. Member States must commit to improving the well-being of vulnerable people, guarantee gender equality and encourage a just transition to a climate-neutral, inclusive and egalitarian social and economic order.

2. The United Nations was one of the few organizations with a track record of mobilizing the entire international community and achieving tangible results. Through the convening of the world social summit, Member States would help to revitalize discussions and inspire action in the fight against poverty.

3. **Ms. Berchtold** (Switzerland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that more than 50 per cent of the world's population was made up of women and non-binary and trans persons. Efforts should be made to ensure that, by 2030, they had unlimited access to health care and could exercise their sexual and reproductive rights. Furthermore, period poverty still existed throughout the world. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, over 500 million children, especially in low-income countries, attended schools that lacked basic hygiene services, with the result that many young menstruating people did not attend regularly. Some Swiss cantons and villages had recently begun to offer free hygiene products at educational and sports institutions. There was a need for research and

awareness-raising with respect to illnesses affecting persons with uterus; too often, young people were unable to attend school because of pain caused by endometriosis. Access to appropriate health care should be guaranteed for all.

4. **Ms. Al-thani** (Qatar) said that her country followed an approach to development that focused on protecting the human rights of all groups in society, without discrimination. To that end, her Government had launched a national strategy for the period 2018–2022 aimed at implementing the Qatar National Vision 2030. The Government had also launched a strategy for the period 2021–2025 to support persons with disabilities, which prioritized the issues of social inclusion, decent work and combating discrimination. Qatar looked forward to hosting the fourth Global Disability Summit in 2028, in cooperation with the International Disability Alliance.

5. Qatar sought to place young people at the heart of its development policies and its foreign humanitarian aid programmes. In 2023, the Ministry of Sports and Youth had drafted a national youth policy with the aim of involving young people in decision-making and enhancing their prospects. Qatar remained committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and was working assiduously to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to social protection, health and education. The Government would continue to support multilateral efforts to recover from the global health crisis.

6. Qatar attached great importance to the family and its role in social development, as evidenced by the projects undertaken by the Doha International Family Institute. The Government would work with the Institute to host a conference in 2024 to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, her delegation had facilitated discussions related to a General Assembly resolution on the family.

7. **Mr. Popadiuk** (Ukraine), speaking as a youth delegate, said that his country was a democracy under Russian attack. As an educator, he needed to adapt his methods in the face of air alarms, missile threats and power outages. During the high-level week, he had heard statements about the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change, but it was difficult to talk to children in bomb shelters about United Nations goals and the global security system when a member of the Security Council was shelling his country and engaging in nuclear blackmail.

8. Helping Ukraine would advance the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations

and would help to stop genocide, colonialism and mass hunger. Young Ukrainians had adapted to the conditions when full-scale war broke out some had gone to the front lines or were organizing volunteer relief efforts, establishing non-governmental organizations or making efforts to rebuild. People in other countries could learn from their experiences in order to avoid mistakes. Ukrainians were grateful for the outpouring of support to date but were aware that even more was needed.

9. **Mr. Demchenko** (Ukraine), speaking as a youth delegate, said that he had joined the armed forces at the beginning of the Russian invasion. He had found it very difficult to think about future goals and social development when sitting under fire in the trenches. Efforts must be made to show that the worst remnants of the past – such as aggression, imperialism and neocolonialism – had no place in the present. An aggressor and dictator must not be allowed to succeed, and international law, freedom and solidarity must prevail.

10. Young people from among the oppressed Indigenous Peoples of Russia were forced to die in a senseless, bloody war because they had been colonized, assimilated and imprisoned within the same empire that was trying to subjugate Ukraine. He called on them to join Ukraine in solidarity and he looked forward to a day when representatives of free nations, emerging from a post-Russian Federation space, would be seen at the United Nations.

11. **Ms. García Hernández** (Cuba) said that progress on social development continued to be held back by unequal wealth distribution and unilateral coercive measures against the South. Greater cooperation and solidarity were needed to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality, promote productive and decent employment and build more inclusive societies. The commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development of 1995 remained in place, and the convening of a social summit in 2025 merited careful evaluation and, if held, would require a rigorous intergovernmental preparatory process. Her delegation hoped that the new United Nations Youth Office would carry out its mandate in a balanced manner.

12. The Constitution of 2019 had further strengthened the rights of persons with disabilities, the elderly, young persons and families. Cuba had introduced one of the most advanced family codes in the world, which expanded the recognition and protection of the rights of children, women, older adults, persons with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other persons and families of varying compositions. With population ageing a main sociodemographic

challenge, the protection of older adults was emphasized to ensure ageing with dignity and rights. In 2021, a Cuban social and labour observatory and the National Commission were created to oversee the application of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Around 20 per cent of deputies in Parliament were between 18 and 35 years of age, and in July 2023, the Government had approved the comprehensive care policy for children, adolescents and young people and its action plan for the period 2023–2030.

13. The positive results had been achieved despite the economic blockade imposed by the United States of America, which violated the Charter of the United Nations and international law and affected the enjoyment of human rights and the well-being of the Cuban people, in particular older persons, persons with disabilities, women and children.

14. **Ms. Skali** (Morocco), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people were not only the main drivers of growth, but also a source of creativity and productivity. The United Nations Youth Office was a commendable initiative that aimed to include young people in political discourse to ensure that their ideas contributed to a more sustainable and resilient future.

15. The persistence of gender inequalities in education was a cause of deep concern that demanded urgent attention. It was unacceptable that, in many parts of the world, discriminatory practices hindered girls' access to education. Education was not only a fundamental right, but also a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of gender inequality. Member States had the responsibility and duty to take beneficial political decisions for a sustainable future.

16. **Mr. Chaquki** (Morocco), speaking as a youth delegate, said that climate change was a dire concern. Nations were confronted with the grim reality of potential oblivion owing to the relentless rise in sea levels. Prolonged and severe droughts and flooding affected the most vulnerable in particular, including persons with disabilities, older persons and those with pre-existing medical conditions. Climate change was a humanitarian crisis that demanded sustained action, as the lives of millions were at stake. During the high-level week of the General Assembly, world leaders had discussed matters of paramount importance and had made commitments. Young people must be placed at the centre when those words were transformed into actions.

17. **Mr. Altarsha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country had introduced broad reforms aimed at strengthening the institutional and regulatory framework for social development. In 2010, it had come

close to achieving the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by providing social services, fuel and electricity, decent jobs and social security and health insurance.

18. Since 2011, Syria had faced exceptional circumstances as a result of the war waged by armed terrorist groups with the support of certain Governments, and owing to the operations of the so-called international coalition and the illegitimate military presence of United States and Turkish occupation forces on Syrian territory, to say nothing of the imposition of illegal unilateral coercive measures and repeated Israeli acts of aggression on civilian objects. In order to address those issues, national resources had been directed away from social development and rebuilding.

19. The Government had nevertheless continued to expand the social safety net in line with strategies to address the needs of children, older persons, young people and women. Drafts had been introduced to amend laws relating to social security law and labour, and the Government had recently raised wages by 100 per cent for public sector employees and retirees in order to alleviate the effects of the economic embargo imposed by the United States and the European Union on the Syrian people.

20. The Government, working with the private sector and non-governmental organizations, had piloted a programme of cash allowances for children with disabilities. It had also provided educational grants to the unemployed and allowances to workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Perhaps the most important initiative had been the social insurance programme, which provided coverage to more than half a million Syrian citizens. The Syrian Government had worked to overcome the effects of economic sanctions and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, which were critical to collective prosperity, social justice and rectifying the systematic exclusion of the most disadvantaged groups.

21. **Mr. Shatil** (Bangladesh) said that his country had made efforts to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality, ensure education and housing, achieve universal health coverage and include vulnerable groups in social development. The Government, as part of its expansion of social programmes, had earmarked around 16 per cent of the national budget for social security and had provided 27 million people with direct cash transfers under social protection schemes. In 2023, a nation-wide universal pension scheme had been introduced.

22. In order to address homelessness and compensate those rendered homeless as a result of climate change and disasters, the country had launched a project that

had provided safe and sustainable houses to 550,000 homeless families, free of cost. In partnership with the private sector, the Government had established around 18,000 community-based health clinics, which offered health care to mothers and children and essential medicines to the poor. The Government also provided educational stipends and free textbooks at the primary and secondary levels, and, in 2023, had begun to provide food to all school children.

23. In order to foster economic growth, Bangladesh had established 100 special economic zones and hi-tech parks and had expanded electricity coverage to the entire country. The Government had adopted policies to foster information and communications technology skills among young people and had taken measures to promote the country as a global hub for technology entrepreneurship. His delegation welcomed the proposal of the Secretary-General to convene a world social summit in 2025, which would present an opportunity to advance a people-centred approach to development and accelerate action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

24. **Mr. Töpfer** (Germany), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the German youth delegates had spent the summer meeting with young people in Germany, asking them to share their idea of a perfect world. Two important conclusions could be drawn from their answers. First, many of the goals that they advocated, such as mitigating the effects of climate change and ensuring equitable access to resources, were goals that the General Assembly had already included in its resolutions. Second, young people were often disproportionately affected by global crisis and conflicts. They should therefore have the right to advocate for themselves in terms of the response to global shocks. Ultimately, however, all generations must work together.

25. **Ms. Essig** (Germany), speaking as a youth delegate, said that she had spoken to young people who, despite the institutional, financial and structural barriers they faced, played an important role in the realization of sustainable development, the prevention of crisis and the advancement of peace. Young people were change-makers, innovators, decision makers, professional partners and experts on their own lived reality. There was a need for mutually respectful partnerships between young people and other generations. Furthermore, it was expected that, in 2030, young people would make up more than 50 per cent of the global population; on that basis alone, their perspectives, skills and contributions should be integrated into all stages of decision-making.

26. **Ms. Asaju** (Nigeria) said that, in the face of humanitarian, economic, social, food and climate crises, Member States must work together to ensure that people could feed themselves and not fall into poverty. Her delegation was concerned that, with less than 10 years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the world was not on track to eliminate poverty, hunger and malnutrition. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to be felt, especially by developing countries. In order to ensure a successful recovery, the decisions of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development should be implemented.

27. Nigeria had made it a priority to include the most vulnerable, including women and girls, older persons and persons with disabilities, when elaborating development programmes and frameworks. In order to raise the standard of living, the Government had developed an eight-point agenda to address food security, poverty, economic growth and job creation, access to capital, security, the creation of an enabling environment, rule of law and corruption. The Government had also recently passed a law creating a student loan scheme for poor individuals, which would help to increase school enrolment. A “zero hunger” policy had been launched to reduce malnutrition among students. Cash transfers were provided to individuals to cushion the effects of inflation resulting from the removal of fuel subsidies.

28. **Mr. Kattanga** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his country had made strides towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals 2 to 7 by increasing the country’s food self-sufficiency ratio, improving the availability of essential medicines, reducing early childhood mortality and increasing general education requirements. Significant milestones had also been achieved in pioneering gender equality and improving the water supply in both urban and rural areas. The Government was also investing in agriculture, agribusiness and infrastructure and was harnessing science, technology and innovation towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

29. Tanzania provided free primary and secondary education to all and had revamped its education policy to improve quality. The budget for student loans had been increased and schools specializing in science, technology, engineering and mathematics had been established. The Government was continuing to expand access to health care, by building 56 new hospitals and 300 dispensaries and stepping up the procurement and distribution of medicines and medical equipment.

30. The Government had adopted policies and programmes to address the challenges faced by women

and girls, persons with disabilities and older persons. It had also taken steps to assist young people, as more than 70 per cent of the country’s population was under 30 years of age. To that end, a youth guarantee scheme and loan facility for young people had been introduced under the Agricultural Inputs Trust in order to expand their access to land ownership.

31. In the light of the repercussions of climate change on food security in Tanzania, the Government had begun to implement a national environmental master plan for the period 2022–2032. The plan, which provided for seed and fertilizer subsidies and tax exemptions on agricultural equipment, had improved the country’s food self-sufficiency ratio in 2023. In addition, Tanzania was subsidizing petrol and diesel and providing tax relief on edible oils and fertilizers in an effort to address inflation.

32. **Ms. Khadeeja** (Maldives) said that small island developing States, with their small populations and low economic capacities, faced many challenges in their pursuit of social development. In addition, the looming threat of climate change, coupled with the geographical remoteness of those States and their dependence on narrow economic foundations, further complicated matters. Notwithstanding such challenges, her Government remained committed to fostering inclusive social development.

33. As young people accounted for over 35 per cent of the Maldivian population, the Government was committed to promoting their rights, enhancing their economic and educational opportunities and bolstering their participation in decision-making processes. Since the launch in 2019 of a free education scheme for degree students, over 16,000 individuals had enrolled and 6,000 had graduated.

34. Maldives had introduced a national social health insurance scheme to ensure affordable and accessible health care for all nationals, which had recently been expanded to cover mental health services. In January 2023, the Government had established a national disability registry, a crucial step towards accurately identifying and categorizing the diverse needs of persons with disabilities, including those facing mental health challenges. A new financial support framework for persons with disabilities had led to a significant increase in the baseline disability allowance.

35. In Maldives, social welfare spending was estimated to double by 2050 owing to the country’s low fertility rate and ageing population. As a result, more sustainable social protection planning was needed.

36. **Ms. Samai** (Algeria) said that the introduction of social inclusion programmes in her country had helped to strengthen economic growth, combat poverty and improve living conditions, especially for the most disadvantaged. In particular, a series of laws had been adopted to ensure comprehensive and mandatory social insurance. The Government had also established the Social Development Agency, an administratively and financially independent public entity that promoted the sound and transparent management of social programmes for the needy. The Agency provided direct support to disadvantaged groups through a monthly solidarity allowance for heads of households who were unable to work, as well as for persons with special needs and older persons.

37. The Government had enacted legislation that regulated care for older persons in their homes and set conditions for the establishment, management and oversight of elder care facilities. Algeria had made efforts to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities through the creation of small economic enterprises that harnessed their initiative and enhanced their skills.

38. Algeria had lowered its youth unemployment rate through mechanisms such as the National Unemployment Insurance Fund and the National Agency for the Management of Microcredit and by including a provision on unemployment insurance in the Financial Act (2022). The Government was taking a multidimensional approach to the growing issue of homelessness by studying its social, economic and cultural root causes. In 2022, some 380,000 housing units had been created throughout the country. Pandemic recovery efforts had afforded Algeria the opportunity to redesign its long-term social and economic policies with a view to creating a more inclusive, equitable and resilient society.

39. **Ms. Calem-Sangiorgio** (Monaco) said that young people must be recognized as agents of change. Monaco welcomed the convening in 2023 of the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum, which had been well-attended thanks to its hybrid format and the technological know-how of its young participants.

40. Her country supported efforts to foster intergenerational solidarity and dialogue through its Youth Economic, Social and Environmental Council, which invited high school students to propose themes for reflection by the authorities and which organized meetings between young people and public and private actors. Issues addressed by the Council in 2023 included the installation of geothermal panels, cycling safety and

the social integration of persons with hearing impairments.

41. A weak job market continued to stymie career development among young people. To address that concern, the Government had recently launched the Monaco for Employment initiative, which had brought together companies and job seekers. Organizations such as the Monaco Social Funds had also provided young candidates with job search advice and information on national labour regulations.

42. Monaco, a co-chair of the Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, attached great importance to athletic activities. The Government provided free after-school sports programmes and sports scholarships and, in June 2023, had worked with local organizations and the professional football club AS Monaco to organize the Munegu Cup, a football tournament for schoolchildren.

43. **Ms. de Gabrielle** (Malta), speaking as a youth delegate, said that intersecting forms of violence, hate speech, and discrimination based on sex, belief, race, nationality, sexual orientation and gender identity must be eliminated. In addition, efforts must be made to ensure that older persons, who continued to suffer from ageism, deprivation of liberty and difficulties in accessing justice and health services, could enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with others. In addition, persons with disabilities faced barriers to their full, meaningful and equal participation in society and suffered disproportionately in conflict situations.

44. Recent climate change-induced disasters had had an impact on human rights, economies and societies. Any mitigation and adaptation measures should be human rights-based and adapted to persons in vulnerable situations.

45. Literacy and quality education allowed individuals to participate fully in their communities. Malta recognized the importance of equipping youth with the tools to develop critical thinking and advocacy skills to ensure that they could actively participate in shaping the policies and decisions that affected them. During its term as a member of the Security Council, Malta had highlighted the links between literacy levels and international peace and security.

46. The United Nations must lead by example by fostering the meaningful and inclusive engagement of youth in all decision-making spaces. In that regard, Malta welcomed the recent establishment of the United Nations Youth Office. Youth engagement could also contribute positively to the work of the Security Council, in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations

and in addressing the crucial intersection of climate change, development and security. More must be done to incorporate youth perspectives in General Assembly and Economic and Social Council forums.

47. **Ms. Offenbacher** (Hungary), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, during her mandate, she had participated in events related to social development, including meetings with decision makers. The youth delegate programme had enabled her to contribute to United Nations mechanisms directly and effectively, as, for example, when a draft submitted to the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women had included material based on her consultations with girls on the subject of technology and innovation. Through her discussions with young people in Hungary about their challenges, a clear message for the United Nations and world leaders had emerged: individual nations could no longer pretend that they stood in isolation, as the challenges of climate change, inflation and war required global solidarity. Close cooperation was needed to realize the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

48. Being a youth delegate had changed her life. However, although she had met powerful Hungarian decision makers and civil society leaders and had participated in high-level events at the Commission on the Status of Women and the General Assembly, she had sensed that the youth delegate group did not always get the attention it deserved. The coordination of the programme should be more transparent, and those responsible for administering the programme should ensure sufficient and open communication so that delegates did not miss out on opportunities. Member States should ensure that the youth delegates had sufficient and continuous funding for their work. Finally, she urged all young people, wherever they might be, to seek opportunities to represent their peers at the national and international levels and to be voices for change in their communities.

49. **Ms. Kasymalieva** (Kyrgyzstan) said the issue of social justice had been widely discussed during events held during the recent sixty-first session of the Commission for Social Development, where Member States had expressed support for full employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities, accelerating recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and implementing the 2030 Agenda.

50. At the national level, Kyrgyzstan had integrated the Sustainable Development Goals and the principles of social development into its main strategic documents. The Government had developed a social passport for poor families, an official document that facilitated the automated exchange of information between local self-

government bodies and social protection bodies through an inter-agency electronic system. Initiatives of that kind had helped to mitigate the effects of poverty and had provided social protection to those in need.

51. Kyrgyzstan had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2019. State policies were currently aimed at providing an accessible environment for persons with disabilities in all spheres of life. Persons with disabilities were actively involved in decision-making processes in all areas. The Government was currently implementing an action plan to improve quality of life of older persons.

52. Kyrgyzstan, a member of the Human Rights Council for the third time in its history, opposed human rights violations and any form of discrimination, xenophobia or intolerance. During its tenure, her delegation would advocate for increasing the effectiveness of the work of the human rights treaty bodies and strengthening mechanisms for cooperation with United Nations special procedures.

53. **Mr. Alshamsi** (United Arab Emirates), speaking as a youth delegate, said that his country had invested in young persons, inside the country and abroad. It had established the Federal Youth Authority in 2018 with the aim of empowering young Emiratis in all areas and fostering a culture that encouraged dialogue, openness and acceptance of the other, in line with national values of moderation and tolerance. It had also created the Youth Council, a national platform that linked young people with decision makers and harnessed their energy and capacities towards sustainable development. The United Emirates had also spearheaded the international Youth Climate Delegates Programme, which brought young people from the least developed States, small island developing States and Indigenous communities together to discuss climate change during the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

54. **Ms. Alseyabi** (United Arab Emirates), speaking as a youth delegate, said that her country had made particular efforts to provide a decent life to older persons. A national policy launched in 2018 to improve the quality of life of older persons addressed the areas of health care, community outreach, civic participation and financial stability. The Government also took measures to empower persons with disabilities through protective laws in the areas of education, health and employment. Policies had been introduced to ensure equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities and to protect them from abuse. The United Arab Emirates would continue to strengthen social development

through partnerships with other countries and the exchange of best practices.

55. **Ms. Alhammadi** (Bahrain) said that her country had adopted plans and programmes to respond to the needs of its citizens. It had introduced subsidies on electricity, water, gasoline and some foodstuffs, such as flour, and it continued to provide free health care and free primary and secondary education. In 2021, spending on social support programmes had reached \$1.2 billion, representing 13.6 per cent of the total national budget.

56. Bahrain was intent on ensuring that persons with disabilities were able to exercise their rights. It had adopted a national strategy on persons with disabilities and had strengthened efforts to ensure inclusivity and decent work opportunities. Information on disability status was included on identification cards, which allowed individuals to obtain discounts and access supplementary services.

57. Bahrain was a pioneer when it came to the rights of the child, in particular the rights to education, quality health care and recreation, which were guaranteed by the Constitution. The country also attached importance to older persons, providing them with psychological support, health care, recreation opportunities and temporary and permanent housing. Bahrain had also developed a project to raise the standard of living of older persons throughout the country through the creation of assisted living facilities.

58. **Ms. Kamiya** (Japan) said that international solidarity, not division, was needed in the face of multiple crises, including obstacles to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the aggression against Ukraine. By giving paramount importance to human life and dignity, the international community could overcome differences in values or forms of government and steadily advance human-centred global cooperation.

59. Issues facing persons with disabilities required particular attention. To that end, Japan had been taking concrete measures to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, the Government had nominated an experienced Japanese lawyer with a hearing impairment as a candidate for election to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Government had developed its fifth basic programme for persons with disabilities the previous March and had amended its policy for persons against disabilities in close consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities and with input from the public.

60. **Ms. Chan Valverde** (Costa Rica) said that the worsening poverty situation in the world was a profound human crisis and source of shame that should induce the international community to commit to action. The widening gap in financing for the Sustainable Development Goals, currently around \$4 billion, was deeply concerning and a problem not of inadequate resources but of priorities. Maintaining the status quo was not an option. States and other actors must urgently refocus their actions in favour of human well-being and security, which was the only guarantee of peace.

61. Costa Rica supported the call for a social summit in 2025 that must cover the original content of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development in addition to addressing the green transformation, population ageing, digitalization and the migration phenomenon from a social perspective. Costa Rica called for the inclusion of the groups in most urgent need of collective action, including young people, people with disabilities and the elderly. The fourth review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing had entailed review processes in all regions of the world for the first time, and its results had boosted the negotiations around a binding instrument on the rights of older persons.

62. Investing in human security was not just an ethical but a vital and collective responsibility established in the Charter of the United Nations. Costa Rica called upon States to comply with their financing commitments and to use the social summit to channel resources towards the achievement of true global public goods.

63. **Ms. Kane** (Australia), speaking as a youth delegate, acknowledged the First Nations people of Lenape and of Australia and noted that increasing numbers of young people in Australia recognized the privilege of living on the territories of the First Nations peoples, whose young people were disproportionately affected by challenges. The lives of young people were shaped by global and systemic issues. They were facing the severe impacts of climate change and increased hardship, which included an ongoing cost-of-living crisis, which was exacerbated in regional and minority communities.

64. Young people felt that the education system was not providing them with tangible skills for the future, at a time when they faced issues such as poverty, the housing crisis and employment insecurity, which they believed contributed to youth crime. In metropolitan areas, young people were concerned about a lack of transparency in government, which undermined their



faith in those who represented them. Young people were also concerned about the lack of youth spaces facilitating genuine connection and about inadequate mental health resources, which were particularly important for those without a supportive caregiver. Moreover, youth consultations were often tokenistic, with opportunities for advocating limited to those with financial resources, parental support, private education or professional networks. That resulted in uninformed policies based on unrealistic assumptions about young people.

65. There was a need for youth issues to be addressed and for a Government that viewed all issues from a youth perspective and worked with young people. Mechanisms at all governance levels, including the new United Nations Youth Office, must capture the contributions of young people from a variety of backgrounds, who should be actively sought as enabled participants with a view to reducing inequality and ensuring meaningful representation.

66. **Ms. Marijanović** (Serbia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people were the main source of untapped potential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and that investing in their future was the key to an inclusive society. In a world where young people were not sufficiently recognized, Serbia had adopted a new Strategy for Youth of the Republic of Serbia until 2030 and corresponding action plan, consistent with the United Nations Youth Strategy, and was drafting a new youth law.

67. As unemployment remained a challenge for young people, the Government and the Ministry of Tourism and Youth were working providing meaningful employment opportunities. Education was a cornerstone of social development and a fundamental right of every child, so Serbia sought to ensure that it was accessible, inclusive and of optimal standard.

68. **Mr. Matković** (Serbia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that Sustainable Development Goal 4, on quality education, involved science in the preparation to meet future challenges, and that Serbia had initiated the recently adopted resolution [77/236](#) on the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development, 2024–2033.

69. His delegation appreciated the Secretary-General's initiative to form a multi-stakeholder high-level advisory body on the implications of artificial intelligence. However, young people must be involved in any decision-making pertaining to artificial intelligence because they would have to deal with the consequences of its future form and effects. Serbia was the first country in south-east Europe to join the Global

Partnership on Artificial Intelligence and had adopted a development strategy on the topic in 2019.

70. Belgrade would host the international exposition in 2027 on the theme “Youth, innovation and sustainability”, bringing countries together to highlight the innovative spirit of young people and their capacity to drive sustainable development. Young people needed to be recognized as architects of their future and partners in responding to the challenges facing everyone.

71. **Mr. Pereira Sosa** (Paraguay) said that his country had adopted many measures to guarantee rights such as health, education, housing, employment, adequate living standards and access to justice. The approach to social development had changed over time and had moved towards more comprehensive social protection that responded more broadly to that complex problem. The current social policy incorporated a systemic approach, for coordinated public sector strategies; a rights approach, based on the entitlement of all to rights and dignity; a life cycle approach, with a social policy focus on life from start to end; and a management approach, aimed at closing gaps and estimating resource needs to achieve results.

72. In accordance with a recent decree, the Social Cabinet was responsible for managing the social policies of the Government and ensuring coordination between social policy and poverty reduction programmes, cooperation between implementing institutions and civil society organizations, and the design and management of the social protection system. The Cabinet was chaired by the President and headed by the Minister of Social Development. Under the decree, the technical unit of the Cabinet was responsible for implementing and overseeing the activities of the Cabinet, with a view to designing social policies that would reduce poverty and guarantee a good quality of life to the impoverished and vulnerable.

73. **Mr. Imanuel** (Indonesia) said that the complex challenges facing the world had reversed progress on sustainable development and on one its main pillars, social development, which was a focus of the Third Committee. The Committee must address the specific needs of countries, societies and people on the ground and produce concrete solutions for the United Nations to use in supporting Member States in implementing their social development priorities.

74. To empower women, solutions should be aimed at protecting their rights and advancing their meaningful participation in the political, economic, social and financial spheres. The rights of children needed to be promoted and protected, and young people and persons with disabilities should be protected and empowered as

contributors to development. The Committee should share stories of social development successes to encourage Member States to push forward the implementation of their relevant policies. In 2022, Indonesia had hosted the high-level intergovernmental meeting on the final review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022, at which both challenges and progress had been highlighted.

75. The Committee should engage in robust, inclusive and productive deliberations in which no country was left behind, in order to create momentum for moving its social development agenda forward.

76. **Ms. Alonso Giganto** (Spain) said that her country was committed to efforts to ensure increased investment in expanding universal social protection and decent work while leaving no one behind, including workers in the informal economy, who remained largely uncovered.

77. The call by the United Nations to place people and their human rights at the centre of its recovery and reconstruction efforts highlighted the mutually reinforcing interrelationship between the 2030 Agenda and the international human rights framework. In 2021, Spain had implemented a “social shield” to safeguard the economic situation of large sectors of the population and protect them from poverty, including through the creation of a minimum living income that allowed all citizens to live with dignity.

78. Guaranteeing a healthy life was another United Nations mandate applicable to all, including the sick and vulnerable, which was the case for most people with rare diseases. States had a duty to protect patients and their families, and Spain had prioritized that mandate.

79. **Ms. Andújar** (Dominican Republic) said that it was essential to continue to work towards eradicating poverty, hunger and malnutrition and promoting social inclusion in order to meet the targets and guarantee the participation of the most vulnerable in decision-making processes. The full, meaningful and equal participation of young people in decision-making was essential. The establishment of the United Nations Youth Office was an opportunity to foster youth leadership across the United Nations system and at the local, regional and national levels.

80. The Dominican Republic had implemented economic and social measures in favour of the most vulnerable populations for sustainable development. In addition to introducing a plan to provide decent, affordable housing, the Government had established policies for people with disabilities that guaranteed post-COVID-19 care, recognized their rights and

participation, and subsidized pensions. To improve the quality of life of older adults, the country had made progress in education for older adults, in the establishment of care families and care programmes, in the legislative framework and in access to health care.

81. The Dominican Republic had implemented policies to promote the goal of zero hunger. To guarantee permanence and sustainability in food security, family farming initiatives had been prioritized and related initiatives established as public policies. The world social summit to be held in 2025 should allow the international community to strengthen the United Nations framework for social development and promote inclusive multilateralism.

82. **Mr. Drăghia** (Romania), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people had shifted from being a vulnerable group to a catalyst for change. Education was a cornerstone for advancing human rights, fostering social cohesion and reducing inequalities, but millions of young people still lacked access to quality education. The youth delegates of Romania had founded an academy to educate young people about the significance of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. True inclusivity in education required both access and adaptation to cater to the diverse learning needs of all young persons.

83. **Ms. Lazaruc** (Romania), speaking as a youth delegate, said that inclusivity fostered empathy, tolerance and understanding, helped to break down prejudices and promoted respect and acceptance. As resilience was crucial in a rapidly changing world, increasing research in education and medical and mental health should be considered.

84. Governmental efforts should be aimed at research projects for enhancing social development and funding opportunities for girls and women in fields traditionally dominated by men, such as science and technology. She urged decision makers to ensure that everyone could benefit from life-long development.

85. *Ms. Monica (Bangladesh), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

86. **Mr. Blasius** (Denmark), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people were critical agents of change and that youth empowerment was an approach to action and the future that ensured meaningful engagement in political decision-making. Young people needed to be impatient in order to get back on track and find an ambitious way forward. Although partnering with young people was not easy, it needed to be on the curriculum for the future. Youth empowerment was a

skill that started with decision makers providing space and young people making that space their own.

87. **Ms. Iseni** (Denmark), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people around the world reported that civic space was shrinking and that opportunities for young people to participate in the democratic debate were being reduced, which was a cause of deep concern. Decision makers and young people needed each other equally. Sustainable development required engaged young people, and policies and programmes were less effective without their input.

88. Young people were indispensable in overcoming challenges such as climate change. They were working to change the status quo and ensure that green business was more profitable than fossil fuel-based business. Young people were inheriting a world increasingly unsuitable for human needs, and investing in decarbonization and a green transition was an opportunity for society as a whole. Green jobs with fair working conditions were needed to overcome the unemployment crisis that young people were experiencing, in particular in countries hardest hit by climate change. Young people could change the world for the better with meaningful participation in governments, businesses and at the United Nations.

89. **Mr. Tun** (Myanmar) said that the world faced crises caused by climate change, conflict, the pandemic, the war of aggression in Ukraine and illegal military coups that exacerbated existing social, economic and humanitarian challenges, with women and girls, older persons, young people and marginalized communities most affected. The elected civilian Government of Myanmar had cooperated closely with the United Nations and developed the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan 2018–2030, setting out visions for peace, good governance, economic stability, human resource development, the environment and climate change resilience.

90. The illegal military coup attempt of 1 February 2021 and the war waged by the military against the population had caused tremendous human suffering to date. Social well-being had turned to misery, and all progress had been reversed. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had rightly called for radical action to end the unspeakable tragedy that was unfolding.

91. Nearly 2 million people had been internally displaced, and almost 20 million were in need of humanitarian assistance. Approximately half the population was living below the poverty line, and people were living in fear. Many children were unable to pursue

their education and had been endangered by the junta's weaponization of access to life-saving immunization programmes. In those difficult circumstances, the National Unity Government and partners were working hard to provide education and health-care services.

92. The people of Myanmar were losing faith in the United Nations because of the lack of decisive action to address the crisis, which was affecting neighbouring countries and the region. The military dictatorship must be ended and the perpetrators held accountable. For Myanmar to participate actively in achieving the Goals, the military must end all atrocities and return power to the people through an elected civilian Government under a federal democratic system. For that to happen, the international community must extend strong and effective support to the people of Myanmar.

93. **Mr. Lenanguy** (Central African Republic) said that providing quality education in the country depended on the availability of qualified teachers, teaching materials and adequate school infrastructure. Policies to encourage the education of children, including girls and children with disabilities, were needed to reverse the existing trend and promote lifelong learning in order to achieve sustained, inclusive economic growth.

94. It was important to support the recovery of productive sectors to create jobs for young people. The development of the private sector depended on improvements in the climate, business, and investment security. Pandemic-related health measures and the humanitarian crisis had severely affected economic and social conditions and jeopardized the continuation of work towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

95. The Government was committed to improving the participation of women and addressing all forms of discrimination against women as part of responsible measures towards adapting to climate change and had increased information campaigns, education and communications on the consequences of climate change. The living conditions of some cities had improved with the completion of major infrastructure works, including sanitation networks, laying the groundwork for economic and social development. Through its Generate 2030 programme for sustainable development, the country sought to realize the aspirations of its people with peace and prosperity, promote human rights and preserve the natural heritage of humanity.

96. The Central African Republic was slowly emerging from decades of violent crises, and the delivery of basic essential services remained a priority and essential for the stabilization and development of the country.

97. **Ms. Quinet** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that mental health problems were a major issue for young people, yet remained a taboo for other generations and in national policymaking. Although the pandemic had revealed the mental health crisis affecting young people in Belgium and in Europe, the Government had not increased spending in that area. All factors influencing mental health required urgent attention. Young people worried about climate change, armed conflicts, the planet, unemployment, housing, the radicalization and polarization of political debate, and the political future of the world.

98. **Mr. Muaku** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people were natural agents of change and wanted to be an integral part of decision-making processes. The main form of discrimination against young people was based on their age. They were expected to be adults, yet treated like youngsters. In order to encourage their participation in decision-making processes, it was essential to take into account factors including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on skin colour, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, and disability. Information was power. Young people needed to better understand their rights in order to be able to exercise them, so the Youth Council of Belgium had drawn up a charter of young people's rights to raise awareness of them.

99. **Ms. Delija** (Albania), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the recent disasters in Greece, Haiti, Libya and Morocco showed that young climate activists had been correct to call climate change an urgent climate crisis that required immediate action and intergenerational decision-making. Unfortunately, climate action was not the only Sustainable Development Goal on which progress was lagging. Goal 3 was aimed at ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages, but one consequence of the pandemic had been a surge in mental health issues. Albania had therefore adopted the National Action Plan for Mental Health, with objectives for the well-being of children and young people, and was increasing resources for the early detection of those issues. The mental well-being of young people was essential to their development and to the prosperity and progress of societies and global communities.

100. **Mr. Kasmi** (Albania), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the mass migration of young people was a significant challenge. While dynamic migration from the Western Balkans was an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills and sustain the development of the region, the potential loss of human capital could hinder sustainable development. To mitigate that, Albania was

fostering an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and innovation and had launched the National Youth Strategy 2022–2029 to provide career guidance and overall well-being assistance. To support children and young people, Albania was providing assistance for start-ups and technological developments and establishing coding programmes for children.

101. As migration could be either a personal choice or the consequence of a lack of opportunities, conflict or environmental pressures, Albania believed in investing in its young people while bridging the gap between learning and earning, such as through the Youth Guarantee Programme to support young people who were not in education, employment or training.

102. With only seven years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda, children and young people must have a primary role in sustaining peace. Some 7.5 million children had been displaced in Ukraine since February 2022. In the belief that human rights were universal, indivisible and inherent to every person, Albania had presented its candidacy for the Human Rights Council for the period 2024–2026 and would focus particularly on women's and children's rights.

103. **Ms. Pättikangas** (Finland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people could harness their imagination to take action but were losing faith in a multilateral system that did not address emerging existential challenges quickly and effectively. She feared not just for the future of the next generations but for the future of the United Nations. The need for anticipatory governance, to prepare for change and uncertainty, had never been more pressing.

104. The future was deeply intertwined with current challenges and future risks, including artificial intelligence. Advances in that field held great promise, while also posing a risk for human rights and societal disparities, as a huge digital gap related to gender, wealth and location already existed. In addition, Finland was concerned about gender-based discrimination and violence online. Initiatives such as the Summit of the Future, the Special Envoy for Future Generations, the Futures Laboratory and proposals for intergovernmental cooperation offered hope for adapting to the emerging challenges. Universal guidelines must be rooted in scientific information and freedom of expression, which for Finland were lifelines for informed decision-making.

105. Young actors were working for the common good for all people and the future of humanity. In a world of globalization and power struggles, hope and resilience lay in the appreciation of local cultures and traditions

and cultural diversity and in the engagement of civil society, in particular impassioned young people.

106. **Ms. Sonkar** (India) said that the pandemic had slowed progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and widened the economic gap between countries, social groups and genders. The post-pandemic recovery must prioritize the Goals, which India had successfully integrated from the national level down to households. In the past eight years, hundreds of millions more people had gained access to improved sanitation, clean cooking fuel, electricity and health care. The vaccination of children under the age of two had increased by almost 25 per cent, and infant mortality had declined by around 15 per cent.

107. The country's social development agenda was focused largely on the development of digital technologies to improve the service delivery of government programmes. The national biometric identification system now covered almost the entire population, facilitating access to social protection services. Almost half a billion people now had bank accounts, more than 50 per cent of whom were women.

108. India was implementing the world's largest affordable housing programme for the poor and was providing free dry rations to 800 million people. A national rural employment guarantee scheme was designed to guarantee the right to work and enhance livelihood security in rural areas, and the Government was working on providing tap water to every rural household by 2024. To protect women and children from indoor air pollution, almost 100 million free cooking gas connections had been issued.

109. An educated society was key for dynamic economies and sustainable development. The National Education Policy 2020 was based on access, equity, quality and accountability. India had one of the largest start-up ecosystems in the world. In the spirit of cooperation, India was stepping up development partnerships with fellow developing countries through South-South cooperation.

110. **Ms. Almulla** (Kuwait) said that the Sustainable Development Goals could be achieved only through concerted international efforts to extend assistance to vulnerable communities such as women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities. Her country attached special importance to social protection to those groups. The Constitution of Kuwait mandated the provision of social insurance and health care services and required the State to provide assistance to older persons and those unable to work. The Government had therefore implemented a programme to extend health

insurance to retirees and had enacted legislation to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

111. The Constitution also stipulated that the family was the foundation of society and that its mainstays were religion, morals and love of country. In 2011, the Government had sought to bolster the role of the family by enacting a law on the provision of support to needy families and vulnerable individuals such as widows. In 2016, Kuwait had enacted a law on social care for older persons, which guaranteed the right to a monthly allowance and free health care. The State also provided various types of housing to older persons.

112. **Mr. Moriko** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that, although high-level meetings and summits had enabled progress in some areas, the current multiple crises facing the world revealed the fragility of its systems. For developing countries, economic crises were major obstacles to investment for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, fuelling the vicious circle of social inequalities including extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

113. It was essential to increase and accelerate the implementation of programmes aimed at reducing social inequalities. The Government had introduced a programme to eradicate extreme poverty. The first phase, implemented between 2019 and 2021, had focused on the social protection system and broad and rapid impact projects, including universal health coverage, expansion of the social safety net, enhanced rural access to drinking water and electricity, acceleration of the social housing programme, and activities to empower young people and women. The second phase, for the period 2022 to 2024, was aimed at accelerating the reduction of poverty and social inequalities and resolving the fragility in the border areas to the north of the country.

114. In an increasingly interdependent world marked by the increasing cross-border mobility of populations in search of better lives, solutions for social development required the pooling of efforts. Extreme poverty was the negation of social development and a denial of fundamental human rights. More should be done to improve the condition of vulnerable families and the global human development index.

115. **Ms. Le Thoa Thi Minh** (Viet Nam) said that global issues risked undermining the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Pervasive poverty hampered societal progress and, with income and gender disparity, contributed to deepening social divides. Climate change, political unrest and regional conflicts further complicated the realization of multiple goals. The United Nations had a critical role in spearheading

the global efforts needed to address the interconnected challenges.

116. Vietnam had recorded significant achievements after nearly 40 years of comprehensive reform, in particular in terms of social and economic development and the improvement in living standards. With approximately 80 per cent of the population online, Viet Nam was among the countries experiencing the most rapid growth in Internet users. Although a lower-middle-income country, Vietnam was now ranked among countries with a high human development index.

117. Significant progress had also been made in health care. Many once-prevalent diseases were now effectively controlled, and over 90 per cent of the population had health coverage, with health insurance provided to vulnerable groups. Quality education was pivotal to progress on the other Goals. Viet Nam had implemented universal primary and secondary education and was focused on ensuring inclusivity and fairness across all educational levels.

118. Through the rapid expansion of productive employment, improvements to social services and the expansion of the social protection system, the average poverty rate had fallen steadily by 1.5 per cent per year, and the multidimensional poverty rate was below 2 per cent by 2022. In addition, Viet Nam had ensured national food security and contributed to global food security with exports of around 5 million tons of rice in 2023.

119. **Ms. Güven** (Türkiye) said that food insecurity had continued in 2023 owing to conflict and economic downturns. Türkiye, together with the United Nations, had played a key role in the implementation of the Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports and continued its efforts towards the resumption of the Initiative.

120. With more than 4 billion people living without social protection, much work remained to improve the quality and accessibility of public services, enhance opportunities for lower-income and vulnerable groups and protect their human rights. Social development required women's empowerment through support for female labour participation and equal pay for equal work. Unleashing the potential of migrants and refugees was also a prerequisite for an inclusive society. As the largest refugee-hosting country in the world, Türkiye had implemented a comprehensive social cohesion policy.

121. As critical agents of progress and the most dynamic elements of societies, young people were integral to upholding human rights and delivering on the

2030 Agenda. Türkiye had a number of programmes to address the needs of its young people, and its international development policy were designed to provide young people in least developed countries with digital skills through the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries, hosted in Türkiye.

122. Like many countries, the population of Türkiye was ageing rapidly. Its Ageing Vision Document and Action Plan established a framework to protect and promote the rights of older persons and would allow older persons to age actively and healthily, with opportunities for enhanced social participation.

*The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.*