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Summary record of the 5th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 3 October 2023, at 3 p.m.

- Chair:* Mr. Amorín (Uruguay)
- later:* Ms. Hsieh (Vice-Chair) (Thailand)
- later:* Mr. Amorín (Uruguay)

Contents

General debate (*continued*)

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

General debate (*continued*)

1. **The Chair** invited the Committee to continue its general debate on the theme “Building a sustainable recovery for all”.

2. **Ms. Marin Sevilla** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that societies were still dealing with the serious social, health, economic and financial consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which had highlighted the vulnerabilities of the global South and the gaps between the North and the South. In addition, sustainable development gains had been lost, particularly in developing countries. To address the crisis resulting from the pandemic and other major global challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, the food and energy crises, increasing external debt, macroeconomic inequalities and market volatilities, the international community must work in a concerted fashion on the basis of solidarity and the principle of multilateralism.

3. Her Government’s development efforts had been undermined by the systematic aggression of the Government of the United States, through a criminal economic, trade and financial blockade that flagrantly violated all norms of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. That policy of economic terrorism included 930 illegal sanctions that involved pillaging sovereign resources. More than \$22 billion of State funds remained frozen in the international financial system; more than 30 tons of Venezuelan gold reserves had been looted by the Bank of England; and many of the most important Venezuelan assets abroad, particularly in United States territory, remained seized, including the CITGO Petroleum Corporation. Losses from that criminal policy of aggression amounted to more than \$232 billion, resources that could have otherwise been used to finance development plans and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. Her country had resisted those numerous forms of aggression and slowly managed to get back on track towards socioeconomic development. The national economy had grown by 5 per cent in 2021 and 14 per cent in 2022. Her country called once again for the complete, immediate and unconditional cessation of that neocolonial experiment of utmost calculated cruelty, which negatively affected the human rights of more than 30 million Venezuelans and hindered the achievement of the Goals. Its atrocious and inhumane effects had the same ability to generate hunger and destruction as conventional wars.

5. The lack of progress in halting or slowing global warming was of grave concern. Measures to mitigate the effects of climate change must be urgently implemented. Developed countries must comply with their obligations to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Her delegation reaffirmed the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and hoped that, at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, progress would be made towards tangible solutions, including the mobilization of resources.

6. **Ms. Jimenez de la Hoz** (Spain) said that, in the political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly (political declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit), Member States had committed to bold, ambitious and accelerated actions to promote a systemic shift towards a more inclusive, just, resilient and sustainable world. The Committee must build upon the political momentum gained at the Summit and translate those commitments into action in every area of sustainable development. Amid global crises such as climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine, the cost-of-living crisis and unsustainable debt, perhaps the most serious was the crisis of confidence and trust in the multilateral system. To restore confidence, it was essential to comply with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to mobilize the necessary resources in line with the Goals stimulus plan.

7. Spain had offered to host the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, which would be instrumental in accelerating the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and in supporting efforts to reform the international financial architecture, debt management, the mobilization of additional public and private resources for sustainable development, and the use of indicators beyond gross domestic product (GDP).

8. The involvement of local and regional entities was required for 65 per cent of the Goals. Through the Local 2030 Coalition Secretariat in Bilbao, which was funded through the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund, Spain was seeking to strengthen that aspect of sustainable development. Her country’s commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls should be reflected in the draft resolutions of the Committee in a cross-cutting manner, including with respect to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Any regression in that area must be avoided. To make

progress against its commitments, the Committee should promote important initiatives such as the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, the multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States, and the conferences for small island developing States and landlocked developing countries to be held in 2024.

9. **Mr. Budhu** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, at the midpoint of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the international community must take urgent steps to steady the markets and pave the way for a sustainable recovery for all. His Government had established a national road map to recovery focused on addressing and mitigating the hardship inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing economic growth and laying the foundation for sustained economic recovery. Those priorities had kept his country on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and focused on expanding domestic production and growth, fostering private sector investment and adopting innovative, technology-driven solutions.

10. Efforts must be redoubled globally to incentivize recovery and accelerate the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for all. Commitments relating to technology transfer, capacity-building and enhanced development assistance for developing countries must be fully upheld. International cooperation must be strengthened at all levels. Greater efforts to scale up development financing and investment flows to developing countries were crucial to achieving the Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024.

11. Developing countries, especially small island developing States and the least developed countries, were experiencing more frequent extreme weather events. Nevertheless, the climate finance commitments made by developed countries to support developing countries remained unfulfilled. Any sustainable recovery efforts must ensure the full and effective implementation of the commitments under the Paris Agreement.

12. Commitments to countries in special situations must be fully and effectively implemented. The reeling global economy and unmitigated climate change had left the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States trapped in a maze of compounded risks and exogenous shocks. Nevertheless, many of those countries continued to be

denied access to critical recovery support, concessional financing and debt relief and restructuring. The Committee must identify tailored measures and solutions to address the unique challenges faced by those countries.

13. **Ms. Abuhaj** (Sudan) said that her country was in need of international support to help complete the necessary steps for cancellation of its debts and the lifting of the sanctions that had been in place for 18 years under Security Council resolution [1591 \(2005\)](#). The economic crisis in the Sudan had been exacerbated by regional events and the rise in commodity prices caused by global crises, which were leading to an increase in unemployment and a decrease in the value of its currency against the dollar.

14. The recent coup attempt by the Rapid Support Forces militia had failed because the Sudanese army had remained true to its long history of solidarity in the face of attempts to undermine the country's internal security and social fabric. However, the war against the insurrectionists had stretched national resources even thinner. The international community should pay more attention to shoring up the capacities of vulnerable States.

15. The humanitarian situation in her country was deteriorating in the face of destruction of water, electricity, communications and health infrastructure. Her delegation called on international and volunteer organizations to help the Sudan build its capacities to carry out its national obligations towards its people, who had stood steadfast against the rebellion, and respond to their aspirations for a future of development and prosperity.

16. **Ms. Vilmenay Joseph** (Haiti) said that the world was facing crises that required global solutions and increased cooperation. Her delegation remained committed to multilateralism and the principles of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade, the economy and health had reversed the gains made in the least developed countries towards achieving the goals and targets of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and the 2030 Agenda. Special and differential treatment of developing countries, especially the least developed countries, remained crucial for integrating the least developed countries into the multilateral trading system.

17. Economies should be rebuilt in a resilient and sustainable manner to protect people's health, increase business opportunities and better prepare for future pandemics. To do so, targeted technical assistance and

capacity-building programmes should be implemented, while mobilizing sustainable funding for the least developed countries and small island developing States. Her country welcomed the results achieved and efforts made by the Enhanced Integrated Framework and the Aid for Trade initiative to increase the trade supply capacity of the least developed countries through the empowerment of women, support for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and improved digital skills, with a view to diversifying the economies of those countries. However, trade assistance programmes should not replace official development assistance (ODA).

18. In the current context of multiple crises, Member States should not impose export restrictions that were incompatible with the WTO rules, and should accelerate and facilitate the distribution of food and medical products that were of strategic importance for the economies of the least developed countries. Measures should be taken to reduce the rise in global temperatures, while taking into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the “polluter pays” principle. Member States should refrain from adopting unilateral measures that could affect the access of the least developed countries to markets. International organizations such as the United Nations could play an important role in promoting a regulatory and policy framework that encouraged cooperation in and the use of advanced digital technologies while mitigating risks. Technology transfer as set out in the Paris Agreement and the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights must become a reality.

19. The deterioration of security in her country in recent weeks had led to a new humanitarian crisis. Her Government had strengthened its collaboration with the Resident Coordinator Office in Haiti, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to accelerate the implementation of the national integrated framework for financing sustainable development. Her delegation reaffirmed its support for initiatives to address global vulnerabilities and finalize the multidimensional vulnerability index.

20. **Mr. Tun** (Myanmar) said that multidimensional crises and climate change posed enormous challenges to many countries, especially the least developed countries. The most inclusive way to tackle those challenges was to implement 2030 Agenda in a timely and equitable manner. Our Common Agenda served as a crucial road map for addressing crises.

21. His country’s GDP had grown by 6.2 per cent per year on average in the period from 2016 to 2019 under the elected civilian Government. Despite the severe economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the elected Government had managed to maintain steady growth while safeguarding the well-being of its people through socioeconomic relief measures. Myanmar had thus emerged as a potential candidate for graduating from least developed country status.

22. Regrettably, the illegal military coup of February 2021 had reversed that progress and left the nation facing a worsening economic and humanitarian catastrophe. In addition, Cyclone Mocha and other natural disasters had continued to affect Myanmar. The atrocities committed by the military junta had left nearly 2 million people internally displaced, more than 18 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, almost half the population living below the national poverty line and more than 75,000 civilian properties burned down or destroyed. Owing to mismanagement by the military junta, the national economy was in an unstable and unpredictable position, with high inflation rates, skyrocketing prices, frequent electricity outages and food scarcity. The military junta was not capable of governing the country, managing the economy or delivering durable peace and stability.

23. The National Unity Government was working with ethnic resistance organizations and other partners to provide humanitarian assistance. Members of the civil disobedience movement were offered assistance in starting small businesses. The only way to fully resolve the crisis in Myanmar was to end the military dictatorship and hold the perpetrators to account. The international community, in particular the United Nations, should support the people of Myanmar in their relentless efforts to end the military dictatorship and its atrocities and return power to the people through the elected civilian Government under a federal democratic system.

24. **Ms. Rodríguez Mancia** (Guatemala) said that, to build a sustainable recovery for all, effective, transparent and enhanced cooperation that responded to countries’ priorities was needed more than ever. Compliance with the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income should be assessed. Reform of international financial institutions was essential to increase the participation of developing countries and provide them with sustainable access to resources. The current eligibility criteria should be revised to include measures of progress that went beyond income and reflected multidimensional vulnerabilities. Public finances and international cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, must be strengthened.

25. Her country reiterated its firm commitment to fulfilling its national development priorities, upholding human rights and maintaining peace, equity and justice. One of its priorities was to achieve food and nutritional security. Food production must be increased in an efficient, sustainable and environmentally friendly manner by investing in innovative agricultural technologies.

26. As a country that was highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, Guatemala advocated respect for the environment and the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems. In the lead-up to the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, more ambitious action was needed to increase funding for adaptation and resilience, and to invest in projects to support a sustainable recovery, using clean energy and green technology. Three decades after the adoption of the Framework Convention, climate action was insufficient and the impacts of climate change had increased, disproportionately affecting developing nations. Progress must be made in negotiations on the full establishment and operationalization of the loss and damage fund and on the allocation of new and flexible financial resources.

27. Measures to improve the protection of the human rights of migrants and their families, including commitments to reduce the costs of sending family remittances, were needed. The comprehensive development plan developed with the support of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean represented a significant opportunity to address the common challenges and opportunities faced in the region. Her country was working to preserve its heritage and share its millennia-old cultural wealth with the world. Her delegation thus valued discussions in the Committee on the protection of cultural heritage and its role in promoting sustainable development.

28. A renewed United Nations must include a strengthened development architecture, including the resident coordinator system, that responded more effectively to requests for support. Her delegation was concerned about the financial situation of the system, which relied on voluntary contributions. As a result, most of its efforts were directed towards resource mobilization when they should be focused on the implementation of programmes to support countries.

29. **Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom) said that progress towards achieving most of the Sustainable Development Goals was off track, with climate, environment, gender, poverty reduction and hunger targets most at risk. The political declaration of the Sustainable Development

Goals Summit provided a seven-year road map for targeting policies and investments towards accelerated progress across the Goals.

30. A bigger, better and fairer international financial system was needed. His country supported reform of multilateral development banks to enable the release of additional finance and the creation of a more resilient and sustainable international financial architecture that was better at mobilizing private investment. His Government was committed to stopping illicit financial flows, including through the City of London. Such flows diverted vital domestic resources away from developing countries.

31. In the lead-up to the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, focus should be maintained on the goals of the Paris Agreement and the Glasgow Climate Pact. Efforts must be redoubled to limit global temperature rise to 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels, cut emissions, transition to renewable energy and protect at least 30 per cent of land and oceans by 2030. The United Kingdom supported the launch of a loss and damage fund, which should deliver for the most vulnerable, have a broad range of contributors and be coordinated with other funds. Following the review of the Sendai Framework, disaster risk reduction must be mainstreamed across the Committee's work.

32. Science, evidence and data should underpin efforts to accelerate the achievement of the Goals. His country was committed to open and equal science partnerships with developing countries. The international community must work together to harness, in an inclusive manner, the innovations presented by artificial intelligence for achieving the Goals.

33. His delegation remained committed to achieving progressive outcomes for women and girls within the Committee, at the very least in line with previously agreed commitments. Attention must be paid to the new and existing challenges faced by women and girls.

34. **Mr. Rupende** (Zimbabwe) said that the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic and financial crises had laid bare faults and gaps in the global system that urgently needed to be addressed. The goal should be not merely to return to pre-pandemic conditions but to build a more just and resilient world for all. Sustainable recovery meant addressing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development in an integrated manner. It also meant investing in renewable energy and green technologies and creating green jobs; strengthening social safety nets; promoting inclusive and high-quality education,

affordable and accessible health care, sustainable urbanization and gender equality; and halting biodiversity loss. Focus should be placed on building resilience to future pandemics and the impacts of climate change, natural disasters and economic shocks.

35. Collaboration at all levels would be critical to achieving that vision. Governments, civil society, the private sector and international organizations must join efforts to mobilize resources, share knowledge and implement sustainable recovery measures. The importance of multilateralism could not be overemphasized. The United Nations would play a central role in facilitating international cooperation and setting global goals. Despite some important omissions, the recently adopted political declaration should serve as a compass for those efforts.

36. Achieving meaningful progress in the current challenging environment would be a herculean task for countries, such as his own, that were reeling under the yoke of unilateral coercive measures, which violated the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and international law. His delegation reiterated its call for the immediate and unconditional removal of those unjustified sanctions, which were hindering the development of those countries and constraining the right of their citizens to enjoy the whole range of their human rights.

37. International institutions must work for all countries and adequately respond to the needs of the most vulnerable and those most affected by the climate crisis and the debt overhang from the COVID-19 pandemic. His delegation supported the proposal of the Secretary-General for a stimulus for the Goals and his calls for the reform of the global financial architecture. Meaningful progress should be made in the reform of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other international and regional financial institutions. His delegation called for developed countries to redouble their efforts to find the missing ingredient to fulfil the Paris Agreement, namely, climate finance, and for the operationalization of the loss and damage fund.

38. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that it was encouraging that both the political declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit and the recently adopted leaders' declaration of the Group of 20 were not dominated by the topic of military conflicts. Given the increasingly slow progress towards achieving the Goals and the deepening structural economic crisis, priority should be given to alleviating poverty, overcoming inequality and ensuring a balanced transition in the light of scientific and technological developments. The Committee should examine and

promote best practices in digital transformation, support for small and medium-sized enterprises, technology transfer, investment in infrastructure, the localization of production, safe and reliable transport routes, and regional integration.

39. Countries of the global South were justified in demanding a strengthened role in global governance mechanisms. The expanding Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa alliance, for example, had already surpassed the Group of Seven countries in terms of GDP. Countries of the global South continued to depend on the fulfilment by Western countries of their commitments. During the opening of the session, the keynote speaker, Ms. Ghosh, had highlighted the fact that actual amounts of climate finance and development assistance did not correspond to the declared amounts, and had recommended considering criteria for measuring those flows. Civil society organizations such as Oxfam were carrying out important work in that regard.

40. Primary focus should remain on the debt problem and the role of the monetary policies of developed countries in the depreciation of local currencies and debt build-up. The emergence of a new kind of green protectionism, which was pushing fast-growing developing economies of the South out of international markets, must not be overlooked in discussions on global trade. Solutions should be sought with a view to restoring the multilateral trading system to proper functioning.

41. The causes of the worsening global socioeconomic situation had unfortunately been distorted in the reports of the Secretariat. The conflict in Ukraine, which was a direct consequence of the aggressive policy of the West and the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, was unjustifiably credited with playing a role in the cost-of-living crisis, the growing threats to food security and digital inequality. The keynote speaker had also confirmed that, on the basis of data of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the food and energy crises were related, not to the conflict in Ukraine, but to systemic shortcomings in the mechanism for setting international exchange prices, especially futures prices, for those commodities, and had placed the blame on transnational corporations. Such corporations, primarily ones in the United States, stood only to gain from the conflict, while their competitors in Europe and poor countries around the world were losing out on Russian grain and energy resources and Russian and Belarusian fertilizers because of sanctions. The Secretariat was regrettably still afraid to provide a proper assessment of the negative impact of unilateral sanctions on developing countries. The

Committee should pay due attention to those illegal restrictions and actively seek to employ resilient tools, such as diversifying supply chains, shifting to national currencies and introducing alternative interbank systems.

42. **Ms. Zoghbi** (Lebanon) said that her country continued to face multifaceted hardships, from the severe economic and financial crisis to the humanitarian one. Lebanon hosted more than 1.5 million Syrian displaced persons. The social and economic repercussions of that untenable situation had been far-reaching, significantly undermining sustainable development in the country. The United Nations and the international community should support Lebanon in devising sustainable solutions to the displacement crisis and urgently alleviate the impacts thereof on sustainable development, on the basis of the principles of burden-sharing and shared responsibility.

43. Developing countries needed to be better represented in international financial institutions. Comprehensive reform of the international financial architecture that adequately responded to the needs of those countries was thus required. Debt distress was a major hurdle for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action. There was thus a need to develop metrics that went beyond GDP, promote innovative solutions to ensure debt sustainability and debt treatment, and facilitate access to concessional financing. Her delegation supported the proposal of the Secretary-General for a stimulus for the achievement of the Goals. Flexible and sustainable core funding, including multi-year contributions, should be significantly increased to enable the United Nations development system to respond to the increasing demands and challenges arising from the multiple crises that were disproportionately affecting developing countries.

44. In the face of the global energy crisis, one of the paradigm shifts that was needed was to fast-track energy transitions to significantly increase renewable energy and improve energy efficiency. Lebanon looked forward to an outcome on the operationalization of the loss and damage fund at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Her delegation would count on the valuable support of the international community for the adoption of the draft resolution entitled “Oil slick on Lebanese shores”, in which Israel was requested to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to Lebanon to cover the costs of repairing the environmental damage caused by the oil spill that had polluted the Lebanese coast.

45. **Mr. Kapisyzi** (Albania) said that, with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals being further hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the global impact of conflicts, increasing resilience to future shocks and ensuring inclusive, fair and sustainable equality for all should be top priorities. The Committee should play a constructive role in advancing collective efforts to achieve the Goals. Systemic reforms within and beyond the United Nations should be immediately advanced to transition towards more effective and equitable development cooperation that would help developing nations to resume their efforts to achieve the Goals.

46. The global impact of the unjustified, unprovoked and unlawful aggression of Russia against Ukraine was dramatic. That crisis could and should be resolved through dialogue. As Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2020 and President of the Security Council in September 2023, Albania had given priority to finding a solution through negotiations.

47. The Albanian Parliament had unanimously approved a resolution mandating the promotion, achievement and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the Goals. United Nations agencies and other international organizations in the country were supporting national efforts to achieve the Goals. Albania had attained several Goals as a result of those efforts, including Goal 16, through the establishment of innovative and citizen-centred public services; Goal 7, through the complete recovery and financial consolidation of the energy sector, with more than 90 per cent of electricity production originating from hydropower facilities and a new target of 54 per cent renewable energy use; Goals 8 and 9, through reforms to encourage private sector investment by accelerating private sector growth and creating employment; and Goal 6, through a new and integrated approach to water management, with a view to enhancing the performance of the water sector. Substantial strides had been made towards women’s empowerment and gender equality, while ensuring the full and effective participation of women at all levels of political, economic and public life.

48. Albania had presented its first voluntary national review in July 2018. His Government’s strategies and policies were completely compatible and consistent with its strategic initiative for European integration. In those documents, 134 Sustainable Development Goal targets were linked to specific objectives of the national strategic policy framework. In anticipation of a future decision to join the European Union, his Government remained committed to advancing critical domestic reforms.

49. **Ms. Romero Veiga** (Uruguay) said that, amid multiple global crises, the commitments and measures proposed in the political declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit should guide the formulation of public policies to close the gaps that prolonged inequalities and hindered sustainable development.

50. Building a sustainable recovery that was inclusive and equitable required a commitment to the environment. Her Government had, in line with its commitment to achieving Goals 7 and 13, taken steps to transform the energy mix and strengthen progress towards environmental sustainability, including boosting investment and the use of renewable energies, which had accounted for 56 per cent of the supply mix and 91 per cent of the electricity generation mix in 2022. At the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the operationalization of the loss and damage fund would be a priority. The fund should respond to the needs and priorities of all developing countries regardless of eligibility.

51. Sustainable agrifood systems were needed to improve global food security. Producing more with less impact on natural resources was the key to the future. Her Government was creating conditions for a low-carbon farming and agricultural sector focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Its national land use and management plan was aimed at preserving biodiversity. Discouraging carbon emissions through incentives played a key role in its strategy. Trade-distorting subsidies presented a major obstacle to achieving sustainable production and food security and combating hunger. Uruguay would therefore continue to advocate a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system. As part of the necessary transformations, the financial system should support sustainability criteria in investment decision-making and innovative business models that had social and environmental impacts. An international carbon credit market could provide the financial resources needed for carbon capture and sequestration efforts to succeed.

52. Sustainable recovery must involve the equal participation of women in decision-making and the elimination of all forms of violence. The Goal 5 targets were far from being achieved. Bridging the gender equality gaps was the responsibility of all Governments. The current circumstances required strengthened international multilateralism and barrier-free trade. Financing for development and international cooperation were indispensable for making progress towards achieving the Goals and fostering partnerships

in line with Goal 17. Her delegation hoped that the Committee's discussions would generate a mandate for the launch of intergovernmental negotiations on the development of a framework of measures that went beyond GDP.

53. **Mr. Montalvo Sosa** (Ecuador) said that developing countries' achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals depended more than ever on the provision of financial resources, capacity-building, technology transfer and international cooperation. South-South cooperation was not meant to replace North-South cooperation or to make up for the failure of developed countries to meet their commitments.

54. Developing countries were faced with various challenges as they sought to implement their socioeconomic recovery plans amidst growing constraints and increasing debt burdens. Urgent reform of the new financial architecture was needed with a view to finding solutions to alleviate the debt burden. In the meantime, access to resources such as special drawing rights should be facilitated. Efforts should be concentrated on combating the growing debt crisis and coordinating actions to avoid the social impacts of rising energy and food prices. Fair trade without barriers was needed, and the workings of WTO should be rethought. Middle-income countries should not be classified on the basis of indicators, and in particular GDP. In the current socioeconomic and geopolitical context, the support provided by multilateral banks in the form of technical support and favourable financing conditions was critical, since it enabled those countries to access concessional credits in order to develop their economies.

55. The planetary crisis was multidimensional and marked by global warming, the loss of biodiversity and pollution, which all had direct consequences on development. Global action was required, based on common but differentiated responsibilities, and the participation of States and other economic and social actors in environmental conservation and the transformation of production and consumption systems. Although Ecuador was responsible for only 0.18 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, his Government had adopted a cross-cutting policy of ecological transition to a circular, resilient low-carbon economy, in addition to a set of targeted strategies, plans and actions. In line with its commitment to protecting biodiversity, his Government had increased protected areas and reduced deforestation. Given the possible global consequences of the El Niño phenomenon in 2023 and 2024, strengthened cooperation in risk prevention and management was needed.

56. **Ms. Rodrigues-Birkett** (Guyana) said that global challenges required global solutions, and, in view of the urgency of the problems the world faced, countries could not afford to make slow and steady progress; multilateralism was needed to enable transformational solutions.

57. Food security was a top priority, however, in 2022, no progress had been made towards reducing food insecurity at the global level. Guyana had adopted policies to make its agrifood systems more resilient and lower the cost of nutritious food. It was spearheading the agriculture and food security agenda of the Caribbean Community, aimed at reducing the regional food import bill by 25 per cent and enhancing food and nutrition security in the region. Guyana was also a carbon-neutral country. It had a low-carbon development strategy, and the second-highest forest cover per capita in the world. Guyana would continue to promote the value of forests in mitigating the effects of climate change and to call for compensation for that global good.

58. Development financing was needed to enable the transition to net-zero energy emissions and to connect the 900 million people currently without any access to electricity. It was, therefore, imperative to make progress on the financing for development agenda, including by reforming the international financial architecture. In that connection, the Bridgetown Initiative should be implemented and the multidimensional vulnerability index and the loss and damage fund made operational. The global community must maximize the benefits of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, to achieve more sustainable and equal societies, while guarding against the harmful use of such technologies and addressing the digital divide. Although approximately 66 per cent of the world's population used the Internet, some 3 billion people remained without access. Technology could have a profound impact on accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but the digital transformation must be human-centred, inclusive and equitable.

59. If the international community failed to address the pressing challenges it faced, poverty would increase. Poverty reduction had already stalled in 2020 after decades of progress. Political will, the financing to implement workable measures, some of which her and other delegations had already outlined, and renewed global solidarity were all needed to prevent a regression.

60. **Mr. Vujačić** (Serbia) said that the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters and economic upheavals had highlighted global interdependence and the need to reform the current multilateral system. Multilateral

cooperation, with respect for diversity, held the key to achieving countries' shared goals.

61. In recognition of the pivotal role of young people, his Government had adopted a youth strategy and accompanying action plan, and was positioning education as a catalyst for sustainable development. It was particularly focusing on improving digital education, with the overarching goal of enhancing teaching and learning. Serbia aimed to achieve an overall Gender Equality Index score of 71, and a score of 60 in the domain of knowledge, by 2030. His Government was also prioritizing investment in science, including through its Smart Specialization Strategy. Under the Strategy, it had established science and innovation funds, science and technology parks and institutes such as the BioSense European Union Centre of Excellence and the Institute for Artificial Intelligence Research and Development of Serbia.

62. Serbia had taken the lead on the General Assembly resolution entitled "International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development, 2024–2033", and remained dedicated to fostering interdisciplinary cooperation in areas such as medicine, agriculture, industry and the environment. The BIO4 Research Campus, which would serve to advance research in biomedicine, biotechnology, bio-informatics and biodiversity, was expected to be fully operational by 2030. The Campus was expected not only to increase research investment, but also to accelerate his country's GDP growth. Serbia was investing approximately 800 million euros in hosting the Specialised Expo in 2027. The Expo would provide a platform for innovation, development and the testing of creative solutions, and the infrastructure for the event would adhere to green construction principles.

63. His Government had a road map for transforming the national food system, which was focused on enhancing food security, supporting small-scale producers, developing shorter supply chains and bolstering local markets, harnessing digital technologies in agriculture, reducing agriculture's environmental impact and ensuring that natural resources were managed sustainably. In 2022, Serbia had adopted its nationally determined contribution for the period up to 2030, and was aiming to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 33.3 per cent compared to 1990 levels by the end of 2023. Its circular economy development programme, which covered the period 2022–2024, further solidified its commitment to the green transition. Serbia had enshrined the principle of leaving no one behind in its legal framework through clear guidelines for public policies. Over the last nine years, it had succeeded in halving the global value of its Multidimensional Poverty Index. Serbia was working to

enhance institutional coordination and integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into public policies. It stood ready to share its experiences with other Governments.

64. **Mr. Kerimkulov** (Kazakhstan) said that the multiple, interconnected problems facing the world had reversed progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Many of the challenges were transnational in nature and could only be addressed multilaterally. The international community must redouble its efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, combat the triple planetary crisis and overcome food, water and energy insecurity. The solutions to those mutually reinforcing challenges entailed increased development financing for low- and middle-income countries, which were allocating disproportionate resources to servicing debt instead of providing basic services to their populations. Geographically disadvantaged countries, including the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, required particular attention.

65. New assessments of the world situation were needed in order to tackle global economic problems while protecting the right to development. To that end, there was a need for an open, transparent and inclusive multilateral trading system based on WTO principles and rules. Global food security must be strengthened, including through the voluntary exchange of information on production volumes and exports and imports of food products. Central Asia was on the front lines of climate change – even if the world managed to limit global temperature rise to 1.5° Celsius by 2030, Central Asia would experience a 2.0°–2.5° rise. Kazakhstan had proposed to host a regional climate summit, under the auspices of the United Nations, in 2026.

66. Lastly, he urged all delegations to support the triennial draft resolution entitled “International cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan”.

67. *Ms. Hsieh (Thailand), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

68. **Mr. Aldehani** (Kuwait) said that when he contemplated the challenges faced by the Middle East region, he had to remind himself that no matter how bad things were, one should never lose hope. Kuwait was a proponent of regional and international partnerships for disaster mitigation and adaptation. It had not forgotten the international assistance it had received from friendly States some three decades prior when it needed help to put out oil well fires.

69. Climate disasters knew no national boundaries. It was with that in mind that, at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, his country had made a pledge to reach carbon neutrality in the oil and gas sectors by 2050, and in all sectors and industries by 2060. Among its ongoing projects were a 30 megawatt solar desalination plant expected to be operational within a few years. Plans for new five gigawatt solar power plant had just been announced. Kuwait already had considerable experience in clean energy production, inter alia with its Sidrah 500 and Shagaya solar plants.

70. Kuwait was mindful of the constraints forced on developing and least developed States by measures to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The Kuwait Fund for Development had been providing financial and technical assistance to countries in need ever since it had been established in 1961, a few short months after Kuwait became a State. His country would remain committed to addressing cross-border challenges to development.

71. **Ms. Mokhawa** (Botswana) said that while her country had made progress towards achieving several of the Sustainable Development Goals, it lagged behind in other areas. The multifaceted global crisis was compounding her country’s dire situation as it strove to build a sustainable and inclusive future. Nevertheless, Botswana had experienced a remarkable transformation over the last five decades, as a result of robust institutions, prudent economic management and investment in human capital. In 2022, Botswana had presented its second voluntary national review, demonstrating progress towards realizing Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17. By investing in the Goals, her Government endeavoured to unleash the nation’s potential, lift its people out of poverty and tackle development challenges.

72. Botswana was witnessing unprecedented growth in digital technology, driven by several national initiatives focused on digitalization, innovation and the creation of a knowledge-based, smart and sustainable society. South-South cooperation on science and technology was critical and should be increased. In addition, scaling up investment in research and development in the countries of the global South and increasing enrolment in those countries’ higher education institutions could play a crucial role in their recovery.

73. Global solidarity and cooperation were more important than ever, especially for the countries in special situations, which relied heavily on partnerships. In her capacity as Chair of the Group of Landlocked

Developing Countries, she called for greater support for those countries, especially in the run-up to the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, to be held in June 2024. The Group counted on the active participation and cooperation of the Second Committee and the Group of Friends of Landlocked Developing Countries to forge a new programme of action to address the pressing challenges facing those countries.

74. **Mr. Napurí Pita** (Peru) said that the crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, rising geopolitical tensions, conflicts and the increase in food prices were oppressing populations and stalling growth and development. The recently adopted political declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit provided an opportunity to accelerate progress towards achieving the Goals.

75. Peru remained committed to the 2030 Agenda and continued to incorporate the Goals into its national planning and public policies. More than 99 per cent of Peruvians had medical insurance, a significant step towards Goal 1, on ending poverty, and Goal 3, on health. The Government would continue to promote initiatives aligned with Goal 8, on economic growth and decent work, including through programmes aimed at improving jobs and working conditions for more than 620,000 women. With a view to supporting sustainable production and consumption and protecting the environment, Peru had launched a circular economy coalition to guide the country's transition, with the support of the public sector, trade unions, academia and the international community. At the Amazon Summit of August 2023, Peru had committed to increasing its protected land and marine areas, in furtherance of Goal 15, on protecting ecosystems. A total of 5 million trees had already been planted in Peru, and 10 million would have been planted by the end of 2023.

76. The weather phenomenon El Niño would be hitting Peru in the next few weeks, with predictions of intense rain and flooding along the north coast, and drought in the south. The resilience of the people of Peru would once again be put to the test. Concerned about potential emergencies and disasters, the Government had invested the equivalent of \$1 billion in a major action campaign aimed at strengthening preparedness and response capacity. That notwithstanding, further preventive, risk-reduction work was urgently needed. International cooperation was fundamental to complement the efforts of the States most affected by El Niño, in line with the political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. In

keeping with that vision, Peru subscribed to the Early Warnings for All initiative.

77. The transition from producing, consuming and materialistic societies to sustainable, conscious and inclusive ones was turbulent. For Peru, the pandemic and the ongoing crises had reinforced the need for a holistic approach to social, economic and environmental policies. That same approach, at scale, should be adopted by the Committee, as coherent policies were needed to effectively and efficiently implement the 2030 Agenda and evaluate results. There was also a need for tools that made it possible to measure poverty in its different dimensions, and thus to allocate resources and design public policies more effectively. The same holistic approach should be taken to identify and measure vulnerability to the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss. Adjustments would have to be made to the financial assistance and development cooperation systems. In that connection, Peru joined the urgent call for the development of sustainable development progress indicators that complemented or went beyond GDP. The negotiation of the biennial resolution on development cooperation with middle-income countries would provide an opportunity to agree on specific, updated measures for addressing those countries' unique challenges.

78. **Ms. Adnan** (Malaysia) said that progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals had been sluggish; hunger continued to afflict far too many, inequality was on the rise and conflicts were spreading across the globe. Reinvigorated commitment should translate into decisive action to confront the challenges head-on.

79. The international financial architecture must be made fit-for-purpose and rooted in the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Most importantly, it should be transformed into a global safety net capable of extending assistance to developing nations. The current high costs associated with loans from the international financial institutions were deterring some nations from investing in sustainable development. The Secretary-General's proposed \$500 billion per annum stimulus had the potential to alleviate the financial challenges faced by developing and emerging economies, and particularly to increase development and climate financing.

80. Malaysia joined other delegations in emphasizing the importance of a free and fair multilateral trade system that facilitated the cross-border movement of crucial commodities. Such a system would foster global economic stability and ensure that all nations had access to vital resources. On a related note, the suspension of

the Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports posed a serious threat to global food security and to the livelihoods and well-being of populations around the world. It had severe repercussions for many lower-income nations which were already contending with hunger and economic distress.

81. Access to technology held the potential to bridge disparities in various sectors. Technology could also be used to address critical societal needs and foster global progress. Discussions on the global digital compact provided a platform for addressing topics such as artificial intelligence and the digital divide. Malaysia would advocate a compact that supported digital inclusion and fostered innovation.

82. In 2023, the world had endured the hottest summer on record. Malaysia, too, had witnessed an escalation in the effects of climate change, including rising temperatures and sea levels and more intense monsoons. In the light of those circumstances, her Government had adopted a low-carbon road map and a national energy transition road map. The latter would play a pivotal role in the achievement of her country's nationally determined contribution and in reaching net-zero emissions. Key initiatives under the energy road map included increasing renewable energy generation capacity, installing solar panels on government buildings and promoting growth in areas such as carbon capture, utilization and storage.

83. Lastly, the developed nations should honour their commitment to mobilize \$100 million annually to support developing countries' climate action. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities remained important in that regard.

84. **Mr. Kattanga** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the international community must summon the will necessary to regain momentum towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Increasing investment, technology transfer and capacity-building, especially in key areas such as industrialization, infrastructure, agriculture, water, energy, education and health would be crucial if the developing countries were to achieve the Goals.

85. In July 2023, Tanzania had presented its second voluntary national review, which showed that it had made significant progress from Goal 2 to Goal 7, and moderate progress with respect to Goals 1, 8 and 10. His Government was determined to strengthen domestic resource mobilization and capitalize on public-private partnerships, and was prioritizing investment in social services, agriculture, value addition, infrastructure and enhancing the skills of Tanzanian youth.

86. It was high time to reform the international financial architecture. Tanzania supported ongoing efforts to reform the multilateral development banks with a view to facilitating large-scale investments that would support the achievement of the Goals. In that connection, he recalled that peace and security were inseparably linked to sustainable development. In war, everyone lost, including the non-warring parties. In the wake of the current global conflicts, the focus should be on finding better solutions to disputes, safeguarding lives and working for development and prosperity.

87. Climate change had become the greatest global threat. As a result of extreme weather events, water was becoming scarcer and was polluted in many parts of the world, sparking humanitarian emergencies and stoking geopolitical tensions. Africa was warming faster than the global rate. Tanzania thus reiterated its call for urgent, concerted action to combat climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

88. **Ms. Eat** (Cambodia) said that her delegation agreed with others that strong political commitment, genuine efforts and urgent concerted action were needed to confront the many daunting global challenges. Nevertheless, all nations could individually contribute to a sustainable recovery. As a result of sound policy choices and the prevailing peace and stability in Cambodia, her country had recovered comparatively fast from the COVID-19 pandemic, was on track to achieve 72.5 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals and, on the basis of its projected economic growth for 2023, was expected to graduate from the least developed country category in 2027.

89. Optimism aside, however, her country's economy would have to grow at an average annual rate of 7 per cent in order for Cambodia to continue reducing poverty by at least 1 per cent per year, and Cambodia would need to recalibrate its development policy to remain on track to achieve the Goals. To that end, her Government had launched a five-pronged strategy focused on human capital development; economic diversification and competitiveness; the strengthening of the private sector and employment opportunities; resilient, inclusive and sustainable development; and the establishment of a digital economy and a digital society. In order to make the strategy a success, Cambodia would accelerate governance reform to ensure that its public administration was managed effectively, efficiently and with a high level of integrity, while safeguarding peace, political stability, security, social order and macroeconomic stability.

90. Cambodia was grateful for the support of all its development partners and would continue to deepen

collaboration in order mobilize resources and strengthen policy coherence.

91. *Mr. Amorín (Uruguay) resumed the Chair.*

92. **Ms. Zamora Zumbado** (Costa Rica) said that the Second Committee remained an important space for dialogue and confidence-building, both of which were essential to addressing shared challenges and generating ideas about how to achieve an inclusive, resilient, sustainable recovery. More concerning than the slow pace of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals was the highly unequal nature of progress. Aware of its constitutional duty to ensure the well-being of all of its citizens, Costa Rica had called for the necessary reforms and transformations to address the root causes of inequality and facilitate social, economic and political inclusion.

93. Firstly, the reform of the international financial system required more coherent action at all levels. The costs associated with access to development financing must be reduced, and fairly distributed, in order to forestall future global economic crises. Mechanisms were needed to close the gaps and asymmetries within and between countries and regions. All of that hinged on a re-evaluation of the mechanisms for the allocation of ODA, investment and cooperation, as well as the development of holistic indicators that went beyond GDP. Reviewing the challenges specific to middle-income countries would also be key, including through the requested mapping exercise.

94. Secondly, the interconnected crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution were symptoms of development models that were at dissonance with science and the growing movement which had recognized the intrinsic, undeniable human right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment. Later in 2023, El Niño was expected to cause weather events such as severe droughts, storms and floods in Latin America and the Caribbean, which would hinder renewable electricity generation, devastate infrastructure and weaken economic and community stability. A systemic approach and investment in resilience were essential in order to enhance prevention, preparedness and rapid response capabilities. Such an approach would also be critical for the implementation of recent agreements, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the commitments made at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including related to the loss and damage fund, and the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological

diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. Costa Rica and France, as the hosts of the 2025 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, would seek to bring together diverse stakeholders and mobilize resources and innovation to promote the health, governance and sustainable use of oceans.

95. Thirdly, it was crucial to ensure that systemic transformations were accompanied by fair transitions, which meant building resilient social services. To that end, Costa Rica had a national strategy for localizing the Sustainable Development Goals, and had strengthened its health-care and social protection systems. The Committee's deliberations could affect the resolution of global challenges if they were based on good faith, multilateralism and partnerships.

96. **Ms. Alsharbaty** (Bahrain) said that her country had been among the first to recognize the importance of building sustainability into national development with its Bahrain Economic Vision 2030 plan set forth in 2008, and had incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals into all of its national plans since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015. Its COVID-19 recovery efforts had exemplified the "team Bahrain" spirit, with comprehensive health services and free examinations for all citizens and residents, and a \$12 billion assistance package – equivalent to one third of the Kingdom's GDP – that targeted the most severely affected individuals and sectors.

97. Bahrain ranked second in the Arab world and thirty-fifth worldwide in the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index. It ranked thirty-fourth globally in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index and number one in the Middle East and North Africa region in the Fraser Institute's Economic Freedom Index. It had shared entrepreneurship experiences with 48 other countries in cooperation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. Bahrain had just assumed the presidency of the Digital Cooperation Organization and was a member of the International Telecommunication Union. It was a world leader in digital government.

98. Bahrain supported various climate change initiatives and had pledged to substantially reduce carbon emissions by 2035 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. It also planned to quadruple its number of mangrove trees by 2035. Her delegation wished the United Arab Emirates success in hosting the upcoming twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties

to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Bahrain would continue to work with the United Nations within the 2021–2024 United Nations Strategic and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and had presented its second voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in July 2023.

99. **Ms. González Carrillo** (Chile) said that partnerships played an important role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In her country's recently adopted national implementation strategy, her Government had set out a vision of a sustainable, inclusive country, with balanced development, peace and justice, built around people and human rights and a cross-cutting gender approach. Halfway to 2030, it was fundamental to accelerate efforts, particularly for developing countries, which needed reinvigorated multilateralism more than ever. In that regard, South-South cooperation was a valuable tool, as it was based on shared experiences, solidarity and respect and was free of conditions.

100. It was imperative to overcome the challenges that hampered developing countries' access to new technologies and to bridge digital divides, in particular the digital gender divide. The international community should continue to seek to maximize synergies between the 2030 Agenda and other relevant processes, such as the World Summit on the Information Society. Chile remained committed to the principles that underpinned the multilateral trade system and to an open, rules-based international order overseen by the United Nations. Protectionist policies must be abandoned. The United Nations was also an essential forum for the effective strengthening of the international financial architecture. Global economic stability was needed to counter the damaging effects of a slow re-establishment of growth and trade, as well as growing systemic risks.

101. Climate change must be addressed more urgently. The climate crisis particularly affected Latin America and the Caribbean, although many countries of the global South were responsible for only a small proportion of greenhouse gas emissions. States should continue to move towards circular economies with an emphasis on the efficient and sustainable use of resources, transition to clean energy in a way that was fair and accelerate progress on protecting the oceans. Chile had made transforming its energy mix a State policy, with capacity-building and infrastructure projects in critical areas, such as the green hydrogen and lithium industry. It was thus laying the foundations for a green economy based on geographical fairness, gender equality and decent work, thereby contributing to the

achievement of the urgent goals that the international community had set itself in the Paris Agreement.

102. Chile recognized the fundamental role and unquestionable legitimacy of the General Assembly, and the Second Committee in particular, in establishing multilateral policy guidelines for macroeconomic, social and environmental issues. Solidarity was needed to achieve the best possible understanding at the current session, and Chile called for draft resolutions to continue to be adopted by consensus.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

103. **Ms. Babikyan** (Armenia) said that she had taken the floor to respond to the statement delivered by the representative of Azerbaijan (see [A/C.2/78/SR.4](#)), which had been a response to the statement made by a member of her delegation the previous day (see [A/C.2/78/SR.3](#)). The representative of Azerbaijan had claimed that discussing the negative impact of conflicts on sustainable development was somehow beyond the scope of the Second Committee. However, in the 2030 Agenda, the General Assembly had explicitly stated: "Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development". The reaction of the delegation of Azerbaijan was yet another incidence of that Member State openly violating international law and international humanitarian law by justifying the use of force against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, and normalizing the threat of the use of force in international relations. The so-called counter-terrorism measures referred to in the statement had in fact been a well-planned, premeditated and large-scale military operation designed to force the indigenous population of Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenians, to leave their homeland. Under the pretext of destroying military objects, Azerbaijan had been shelling civilian settlements, the city of Stepanakert and other cities and villages. More than 100,000 people had been displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia as a result. For all the talk of threats and provocations that Azerbaijan had been using to justify its use of force, the truth was that there could be no justification for ethnic cleansing.

104. The delegation of Azerbaijan had also tried to deny that the Lachin corridor had been under a blockade for 10 months, forcing 120,000 people to starve. On 22 February 2023, the International Court of Justice had issued an order on provisional measures, according to which Azerbaijan was to take all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin corridor in both directions. On 6 July 2023, the Court had unanimously reaffirmed the provisional measures. However, Azerbaijan had defied

that legally binding order, in contempt of the Court. Regrettably, the visit of a group of representatives of United Nations agencies to Nagorno-Karabakh had materialized only after the exodus of the population. For 10 months, Azerbaijan had prevented the mission from visiting. It was deplorable that Azerbaijan was using quotes selectively in an attempt to make the United Nations country team complicit with its policy of ethnic cleansing.

105. **Ms. Bayramli-Hamidova** (Azerbaijan) said that in various forums of the General Assembly and the Security Council her delegation had comprehensively addressed similar allegations by Armenia. She saw no need to repeat her delegation's responses, but wished to point out that, since the signing of the 10 November 2020 trilateral statement, Armenia had maintained armed formations more than 10,000-strong, equipped with heavy weaponry, in the territory of Azerbaijan. The illegally present armed forces had been sustained by direct military, technical, logistical and financial support from Armenia, including through grave abuses of the Lachin road aimed at fuelling separatism in Azerbaijan in furtherance of the revanchist policy of Armenia. Since August 2022, some 3,000 Armenian-manufactured landmines had been detected in Azerbaijan, and since the signing of the trilateral statement, 327 individuals had fallen victim to landmines. No sovereign State would tolerate an illegal military presence or continuous military provocations on its own soil.

106. Her country's counter-terrorism measures had been aimed exclusively at neutralizing legitimate military targets within the territory of Azerbaijan. As such, they were fully aligned with the sovereign right of Azerbaijan to self-defence, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and Azerbaijan had acted in full compliance with international humanitarian law. Every effort had been made to avoid collateral damage to civilians and civilian infrastructure. Thus, accusations of deliberate targeting of civilians by her country's armed forces were baseless and false. Azerbaijan had achieved its goals and Armenia and its subordinate illegal regime had been forced to disarm, disband all illegal structures and withdraw from Azerbaijan. Since the completion of the counter-terrorism measures, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts had continued, and the special representative of the Government of Azerbaijan had met with representatives of Armenian residents on 21 and 25 September 2023. Concrete steps had been taken to provide food, medicine, medical care, fuel, electricity, heating and other essential services to the residents, in cooperation with Russian peacekeepers and the International

Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Next steps had been identified, including with a view to implementing confidence-building measures. Both the Lachin and Aghdam roads were fully operational for the movement of people and for humanitarian purposes.

107. Any claims of ethnic cleansing by Azerbaijan were equally groundless and false. The Government of Azerbaijan was taking the necessary humanitarian support measures and working to address the immediate needs of local residents. Those currently leaving the region were not confronted with violence or intimidation, and were leaving of their own volition. Most of them were citizens of Armenia. Importantly, hundreds of local residents had publicly confirmed that they had not been forced to leave and that Azerbaijani State entities had not behaved inappropriately towards them. That had been further confirmed by the Russian peacekeeping contingent, by ICRC in its statement dated 26 September 2023 and by the recent United Nations mission to the Karabakh region. Although some residents had chosen to leave the Karabakh region, undoubtedly as a result of the anti-Azerbaijan propaganda that Armenia had pursued at the State level for decades, Azerbaijan had unambiguously confirmed that it was happy to create appropriate conditions for them to stay and reintegrate.

108. Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity was an absolute imperative, and the goal of a peaceful, safe, developing and sustainable region could not be achieved by disrespecting international law, resorting to provocation, endlessly repeating false narratives and pursuing a policy of hatred and territorial claims. At the current critical juncture, the international community bore a heightened responsibility to resolutely reject any efforts aimed at distorting the real situation, sustaining hatred and hostility and hampering the region's achievement of long-awaited peace.

109. **Ms. Babikyan** (Armenia) said that people had not left their homeland voluntarily; they had been forced to do so. Azerbaijan bore full responsibility for its war crimes, crimes against humanity and other gross violations of international humanitarian law, which had resulted in loss of life and destruction. Despite all of the challenges, Armenia continued to engage in negotiations aimed at achieving the normalization of relations and establishing lasting peace in the region, and supported the efforts of international partners to that end.

110. **Ms. Bayramli-Hamidova** (Azerbaijan) said that there was nothing surprising about the groundless and unethical comments just made by the representative of Armenia. Azerbaijan was a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country; dozens of ethnic, religious and

linguistic groups coexisted there, all enjoying their rights as safeguarded by the applicable international law. On multiple occasions, Azerbaijan had declared that ethnic Armenians residing in the Karabakh region were welcome to be part of that multicultural model. Many Armenian residents had already expressed their desire to return and live as Azerbaijani citizens. The Government welcomed that and had made systematic efforts to facilitate their voluntary return.

111. Armenia had rejected the possibility that Armenians and Azerbaijanis could coexist peacefully, also with a view to further denying the inalienable right of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani refugees, expelled from modern-day Armenia, to peacefully return to their homes. Armenia viewed the reintegration of Armenian refugees by Azerbaijan as a threat, in view of its own ongoing refusal to engage in dialogue with Azerbaijani refugees. Azerbaijan was firm in its determination to advance post-conflict peacebuilding, reconciliation, reintegration, peaceful coexistence and development in the region, as well as to ensure justice by investing in national capabilities for early detection, early warning, prevention and response to any threats to the safety and well-being of its people or to its State sovereignty or territorial integrity.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.